



DEEPER THAN VISIBILITY

SOLUTIONS
NOT
·PUNISHMENT·
COLLABORATIVE

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YOU BETTER ASK ABOUT US

Our Mission

Solutions Not Punishment Collaborative (SNaP Co) is an Atlanta-based social justice organization that builds safety within our community by investing in the collective leadership, wellness, and political power of Black and TLGBQ+ people. We are a Black, Trans, and Queer led organization known in the community as SNaP Co or by our social media platforms @Snap4Freedom. SNaP Co empowers and develops Black TLGBQ+ leaders (and our allies) in Atlanta to wage campaigns that reinvest into our communities and divest from the prison-industrial complex.

Solutions Not Punishment Collaborative was created in direct response to the criminalization of sex workers in the city of Atlanta. In 2013, the Atlanta City Council was considering an ordinance that would banish convicted sex workers and prohibit them from living in the city of Atlanta. Together with LaGender, Transforming, The Racial Justice Action Center, and Women on the Rise, community members and activists formed a united front to fight back against this egregious ordinance. By the time it was defeated, SNaP Co was born.

Black "Trans" Feminism, is about reclaiming the space the we deserve as trans people, as thought leaders in Black and Feminist movements, historically and today. We must name and center these identities and contributions in all that we do.

Our lives and lived experiences are critical and necessary sites of knowledge production and we will honor the legacy of Black trans people, like Marsha P. Johnson, Dee Dee Chamblee, Juan Evans, Cherly Courtney Evans, and more. At the core, Black "Trans" Feminism is about unlearning the ways of being that weaken our relationship with self and one another. Black Trans Feminism teaches community care and is a site to radically reimagine how we treat and show up for others in our interpersonal relationships, which are all microcosms of the worlds that we want to see and build.

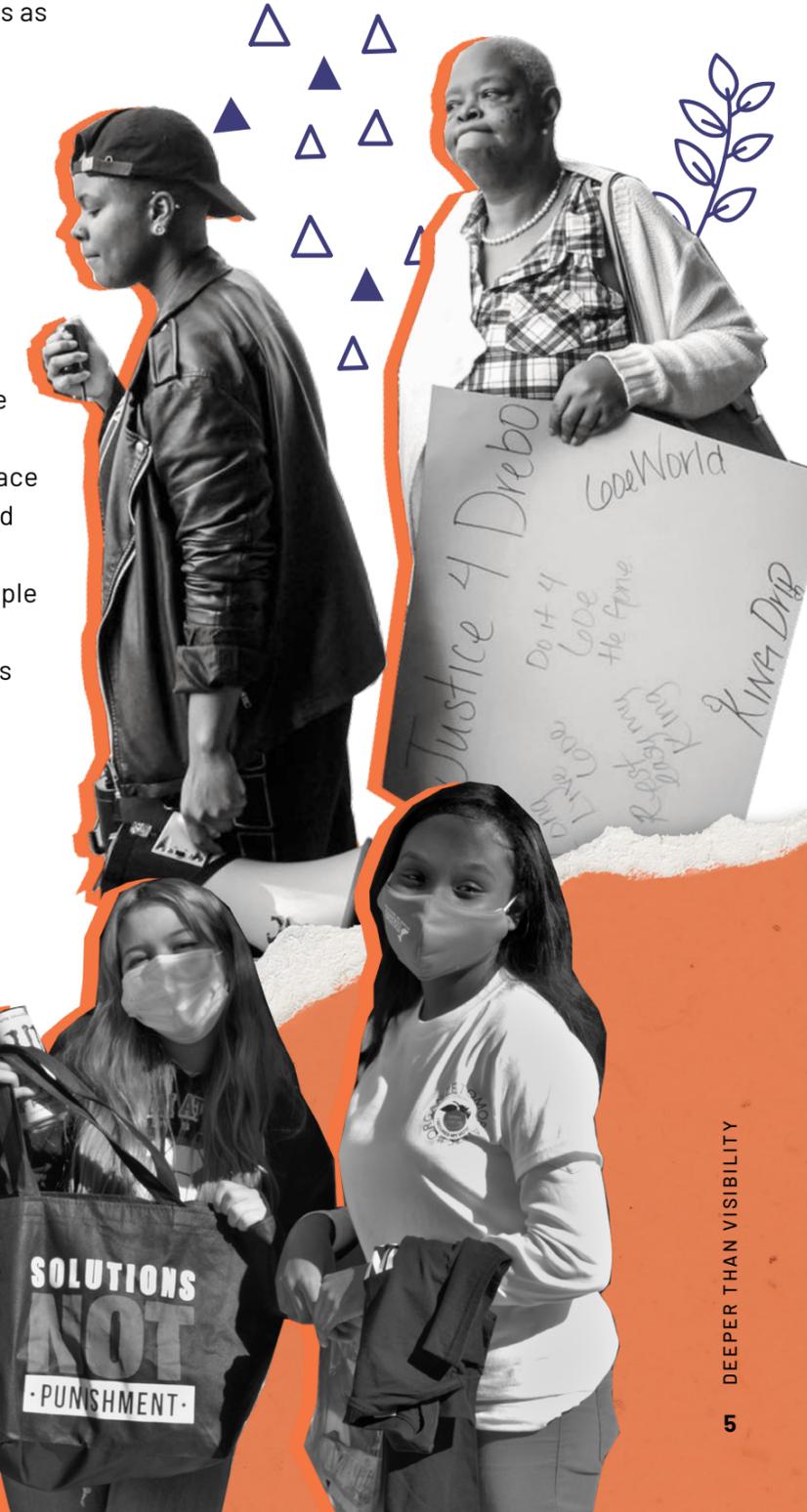
Black Trans Feminism for Abolition (BTFA) takes this a step further and is another way for us to show how deeply interconnected patriarchal violence and policing are. That true safety isn't only about ending and abolishing policing, but also about addressing patriarchal and interpersonal violence (misogyny, homophobia, transphobia, rape culture, and more). To embody Black Trans Feminism for Abolition, one must have the willingness to be in a deep, ongoing struggle with others in order to unlearn all of the things that have kept us divided, without violence and bloodshed. BTFA is acknowledging the reality we live in... that we must fight for our future, in order to win. BTFA is justice. BTFA is a way of being. It's the legacy and the right to exist in this world full of interconnectedness, self expression, leadership and collective power. BTFA reminds us to discover and rest in our place even when people may attempt to move us.

BTFA is spiritual. We can change, transform, and become better versions of ourselves in service of one another. BTFA is also about leadership and what it means to become the leader that this moment needs; a leader who empowers others to lead their own communities. BTFA is about tearing down and abolishing oppressive systems as well as binary ways of thinking.

Our Guiding Principles

We believe...

- That we are the experts of our lives and have the capacity to reimagine, govern, resource, and self-determine new ways of safety for our community
- In the transformation of ourselves in service of the transformation of society
- That we must embody and extend supernatural grace and sacred silliness as a tool to ground us in joy and satisfaction
- We must demand more from the state and our people to utilize what we have to take care of our own
- In collaborative and inclusive organizing that builds the larger movement





INTRODUCTION

BY TONI-MICHELLE WILLIAMS, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Awareness building has consumed national advocacy for Black and TLGBQ+ people. We've been fighting so hard to be seen for so long, that now we are entering an era where the solutions being offered focus more on visibility than material changes to our daily lives. We have Black Lives Matter murals in cities where Black people are still being gunned down by police despite overinvestments in surveillance and policing. We have Pride parades sponsored by corporations that won't hire us unless we are "passing." Rainbow propaganda surrounds us all while Black and Latina transgender women are being murdered by police and civilians alike. While violence against queer and transgender people remains a "joke."

Don't get me wrong: visibility does matter because for so long we've been fed the lie that we don't exist. It isolates and gaslights us into believing that other people know us better than we know ourselves. But at what point do we acknowledge that those in

positions of power have always seen us. They simply aren't *hearing* us. That is why we at SNaP Co. have developed this report. We know that it is **deeper than visibility** and what our communities need most is political power and autonomy. We don't want our trauma to be front-page news if that coverage isn't translating to an eradication of the harmful systems that victimize us.

These systems contributed to my feelings of powerlessness from an early age. My family life was less than idyllic. Violence, addiction, and rage were constants in my home. I knew that home and family were supposed to be a source of safety but I had no means to make that my reality. Even in my youth, I understood that police intervention wouldn't get me closer to that. At best, calling the police was a catch-22. Dialing 911 meant that I would be separated from my family, which would have only made matters worse. It would also expose me to the sexism within



law enforcement. I knew what I needed to be safe but that wasn't being acknowledged or heard. Instead, my gender and sexuality became the target. Ultimately, interactions with police left me without agency and autonomy. They weren't helping me get closer to the safety or accountability I desperately needed. I had to turn inward to truly recognize what it means to be safe and cherished.

All of those experiences are what brought me closer to the ideology of abolition. I always fucked with it because I never fucked with police. However, my understanding of and relationship to abolition has evolved over the years as I grew as an organizer and leader. On the surface, abolition is about ridding ourselves of these archaic, oppressive systems. But it is also a reconstruction of self and community that requires us to trust the brilliance of our neighbors in order to collaborate on building a new world that can only be sustained through community.

Abolition requires deep vision and the ability to see and believe in something that doesn't yet exist. That in and of itself is a skill. We are socialized in this country to dream within confines. To color within the lines. To truly get free, we have to build back our collective capacity to dream our wildest imagination. Before we begin our visioning process, I want to do some myth-busting and dispel any falsehoods you may have:

MYTH 1: More police will keep Atlantans safe.

Giving more resources to the police will never address the structural problems that lay at the root of crime. At best, police respond to harm that has already happened. At worst, and most often, they compound and create more harm. Our media fascination with crime dramas has made us believe that officers spend their days pursuing egregious and organized crime. "The worst of the worst." In actuality, police spend most of their days responding to non-violent calls like mental health crises. Yet in their responses, these officers are consistently fucking up.

MYTH 2: More Black or queer officers will keep us safe.

As is true with most large institutions, individual employees are absorbed into and indoctrinated by the larger system that they work for. This is especially true for police who are called to pledge their allegiance to "blue." Officers are called to swear on oath to prioritize what the system demands of them, not community and our lived experiences. We see the proof of this when officers who stand up against brutality are blackballed and punished.

MYTH 3: The LGBTQ+ community gets more than Black people.

First and foremost, statements like these deny the fact that Black LGBTQ+ people exist.

We are here and we are fighting for all sides of us. But outside of this, queer and trans strategies towards liberation benefit us all. When the most marginalized of us are at the center, we all win. LGBTQ+ people are fighting for a world where we can walk down the streets free of harassment; free to lead lives of dignity. The same thing Black people are fighting for. As Shawn "Jay-Z" Carter reminded us, no one wins when the family feuds.

I prove these myths to be the lies that they are, every single day organizing across this city. Fighting for my people reminds me that we make the road by walking, which is to say there have been moments when I've felt unsafe and then cherished in subsequent breaths. On one night in particular, queer, straight, trans, and cisgender people alike were all in the streets protesting the murder of Rayshard Brooks. We all saw that our humanity was under attack so long as those with badges were emboldened to execute us in the streets like animals. We were building coalitions to make our voices heard and demand justice when I was assaulted by a Georgia Highway State Police Officer. He had an air of righteousness, ego, and disgust in his eyes. As he zeroed in on me and pushed me to the ground, I prayed. I was sure I'd be arrested that night but I was unsure how much further he and his "brothers" would take it.

The officer grabbed my arms and, simultaneously, I felt my belongings being grabbed out of my hands by two white allies. Then, two Black cishet men pulled me away from the police officers, asking me, "what do you want us to do? what do you want us to do?" and pushed me into the crowd where I was ushered to safety. All day, I had been getting niggas into formation, getting white people in formation, making sure people were equipped with the necessary tools in case they were arrested. And when my safety was on the line, my leadership was recognized and honored by those around me. In that moment, I was grateful for my life but also for my leadership. They looked to me in that moment of conflict and recognized that I was a leader and my guidance was crucial. I caught a glimpse into the future we're creating.

All of these life experiences have culminated in my work as Executive Director of Solutions Not Punishment Co. We are a Black, trans and queer led organization that builds safety within our community, investing in our collective embodied leadership, and building political power. We are guided by several key principles, two of which are:

1. We believe that we are the experts on our lives and have the capacity to govern, reimagine, resource, and self-determine new ways off safety for our communities
2. We demand more from the state and our people to utilize what we have to care for our own

We are putting both of these principles front and center through this report. You will hear directly from Black people across gender and sexuality spectrums



as to how we've diagnosed the public safety failures of our city as well as how we've charted a bold path towards a safer Atlanta. This report is for everyone because *safety* is for everyone.

Throughout this report, you will be reminded that we all deserve to feel safe. Yes, even those who have killed or hurt or stolen. We deserve to feel safe enough to be honest and heal from and through that honesty. To be transformed by grace and mercy in a way that snowballs into more safety for each of us because safety cannot exist for some and not all. We are only as safe as our most broken community members are because the unprotected among us will punch up and around them to have company in their misery.

TO MY NIGGAS: You deserve the world. And no one person can deliver it to you. We need *all* of us at the table in order to get free. That includes disabled, queer, immigrant, trans, poor, and angry Black folks.

TO MY ACCOMPLICES: Thank you for recognizing that being an ally has never been enough. Go toe-to-toe with this system alongside us. Own your stake in this fight and remember that this isn't charity; it's solidarity.

TO THOSE IN POSITIONS OF POWER: A reckoning is centuries overdue. Your complacency and empty acts of symbolism will no longer placate us. Commit to real change or step aside.

We need elected officials, drug dealers, faith leaders, educators, sex workers, medical professionals, students, non-profit workers, and everyone else in our beloved city to read and engage with what we have to say. We are tired of being seen without being heard. It's time to move past awareness and dig deeper than visibility.





TALE FROM THE TRENCHES:

ON SURVIVAL AND DESPERATION

“Safety is still a very new feeling for me. Being trans and gender non-conforming, safety eluded me and felt distant for years. To this day, police and incarceration are constant threats that loom over me and threaten the community I have built. The idea that a police interaction could lead to a major disruption in my life and undo all the progress I’ve made, whether it be an unexpected ticket, having my car taken, or being carted off to jail myself.

In 2019, when I was hustling to make ends meet — trappin’, driving for Uber and Lyft, and working the overnight shift at Walmart, just trying to survive — I had a police encounter that changed everything for me. I was on my way to work an entire night at Walmart and was self-medicating to cope with life and my recently diagnosed multiple sclerosis. The lights and sirens came up behind me as I was pulling into the Walmart parking lot - a broken tail light. The police caught wind of the scent in my car, giving them probable cause to search my vehicle. They found THC oil and I was charged with a felony intent to distribute. Because it was oil, and not flower, it was considered a Control 1 substance and I faced the same sentencing that someone selling cocaine or heroin would.

“Innocent until proven guilty” is a hollow promise. The charges alone, not even a conviction got me

kicked off the rideshare platforms and fired from Walmart. The system is full of hypocrisy: society doesn’t want me to sell drugs but then makes it incredibly difficult to make money in a legal way. On top of that, my arrest got me placed in solitary confinement “for my own safety” because, as a trans man, I couldn’t be placed in the men’s or woman’s populations. All I could do was stare at a wall, with no concept of time or when I would be fed. I wasn’t even allowed a pen or paper to distract my mind. I strained myself to look out of the tiny window, hoping a person would pass by and break up the monotony. The traumas I faced still affect me in the present and I have a visceral response every time I see those lights or hear those sirens. My PTSD activates and my heart rate goes through the roof because I know it could be a life-changing moment. Despite being told the police are here to protect us, it’s been in my experiences with them that I’ve felt the most unsafe.

We need to stop punishing people for trying to survive. Crimes of desperation like sex work and

Illustration by SOFAHOOD

marijuana need to be decriminalized because these are often the avenues trans people have to take to live. If our mandatory documents don't align with our identity, even as a passing person, our chances at a job can be lost. How can we afford to live when so many barriers are in our way? It's a vicious cycle that needs to be broken.

The city needs to readjust its priorities. Instead of investing in policies that allow for hyper-surveillance and gentrification, let's try meeting the needs of real niggas in Atlanta. **Niggas are the culture of Atlanta, especially the queer and trans niggas. We make Atlanta what it is.** But you wouldn't know that because the city is getting rich off our backs and hurting the very communities that put Atlanta on the map.

And when I say niggas, I especially mean queer and trans Black people. I need my Black community to know that **by me being me, nigga I'm freeing you.** Your TLGBQ+ brothers and sisters have been at the

front of every movement from the beginning of time, often on behalf of cisgender and heterosexual Black people. When we insert ourselves into the narrative, it isn't to create division, it's to ensure that everyone is free. We have always shown up for our full community with deep love and ask for reciprocity. We aren't free until we're all free."

- DEAN STEED

HISTORY OF POLICING IN ATLANTA

The present day police force is part of a centuries old legacy that began in the 17th Century to surveil Black folks and ensure they were contributing to the plantation economy. To understand the full scope of the forces that oppose abolition, we must ground ourselves in the history that has allowed Atlanta's law enforcement to proliferate into the militarized, multi-million dollar agency that it is today. The modern day police force's seeds were first sown in the womb of slavery over 200 years ago. Without knowing its inception story, and many evolutionary stages, we cannot fully fathom its ramifications.

1600s-1865

SLAVERY

The legacy of slavery touches every aspect of American society and especially policing. Slave patrols were introduced into Georgia in 1775 to essentially stop and frisk Black people who were not on plantations. Any Black person found outside after 9pm - with or without a "pass" from their enslaver - could and would be arrested.

The city of Atlanta was officially established in the 19th century and by 1870, the African American population of Atlanta comprised 46 percent of Atlanta residents.





1866-1877

RECONSTRUCTION

Policing in the U.S. started as a system of economic, social, racial, patriarchal, and ableist control. That is to say, it was a way to ensure landowning white men would always remain at the top of the sociopolitical ladder. With the ending of slavery, policing evolved to respond to potential or emerging Black political power.



THE ATLANTA POLICE DEPARTMENT FORMED

The City of Atlanta shifted from its rural-based marshall model based on vigilantes and volunteers to a formal police department with 26 officers.

1873

CITY CHARTER

This new city charter granted shared authority over the APD to the Board of Aldermen, the mayor, and the police chief

Police reform at this time was not specifically tied to larger campaigns to reform city government but more limited organizational change within police bureaucracy.

1920



HISTORY OF ATLANTA DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

Ambiguity has always existed as to whom or what political institution exercised political control over Atlanta's police force (i.e. mayor, board, city council, etc.)

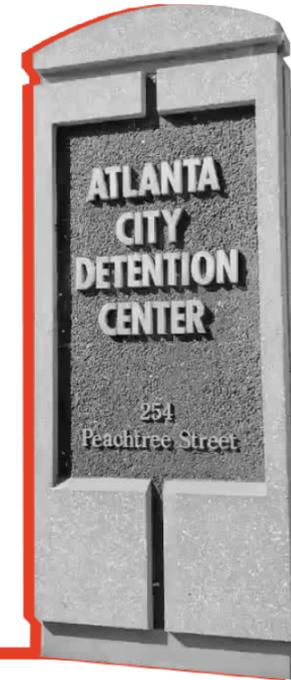
1975

Responsibility for and oversight off the Atlanta Jail and Grady Hospital Detention Center was transferred to the Prison Department from the Atlanta Police Department.

1994-PRESENT

VIOLENT CRIME CONTROL AND LAW ENFORCEMENT ACT

1996 Police began paramilitary and highly aggressive drug enforcement units. Robert J. Kane, a professor of criminal justice at Northeastern University remarked on this phenomenon: "Around 1996, you had this movement toward zero-tolerance strategies... They drive around and look for trouble, and they often find trouble."



Fred Mosebach, head of Atlanta's Freedmen's Bureau notes the brutal treatment of freedmen by Atlanta's police officers.

1867

Austin Wright and 12 other Black citizens unsuccessfully petitioned the City Council to appoint Black police officers.

1866-1877

1870

Police arrest and assault a Black voter. After one of the Black leaders was arrested, Black folks threw bricks at the police, and police killed two bystanders.

Similar incidents of Black voter intimidation occurred during this period.

ATLANTA MASSACRE/RIOT

On September 22, 1906, 10k white people and white mobs attacked Black people in Atlanta in the Atlanta Riot of 1906. Over 12 dozen Black folks were killed or injured. Many recounted that the Atlanta Police Department and some from the Georgia National Guard participated in the violence against Black people.

EARLY 1900S



1954-1968

DE FACTO SEGREGATION AND THE RISE OF THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT

INCREASED ATTACKS ON WORKING CLASS ATLANTANS

Mayor Andrew Jackson sponsored a package of anti-begging and anti-loitering ordinances to "clean up" downtown targeting low-income and/or unhoused people.

1990

The Department of Public Safety was abolished, and corrections operations were configured under a single Department of Corrections.

1995

Atlanta City Detention Center (ACDC), a high-rise jail, opened.

The Atlanta City Police Department works with the City of Atlanta Corrections Department and the U.S. Marshals Service.

1990





TALE FROM THE TRENCHES



"I learned early that my survival hinged upon my success. Even if I couldn't conform to the hegemonic definition of gender and sexuality, I could exceed the expectations of production. I could be the best, the smartest, the most put together and no one would bother me. My Otherness could be obscured from view if I became an overachiever. My parents, who raised me in the wake of the crack epidemic, taught me that in order to be safe, I had to ensure that I was doing what society expected of me, and in many cases, exceeding that expectation.

Once I started high school and began my transition, the upper middle class upbringing that was replete with cars, a nice house, and everything I could have wanted was stripped from me. No amount of achievement up to that point seemed to help my family adjust to my identity. Once I made the decision to be myself, my family pushed me away and I had to learn how to navigate the world on my own. Being trans in rural Georgia is extremely challenging and I had to quickly figure out how to make a way for myself that would afford me safety. The most realistic avenue to safety was college, and I believed if I got my degree, my family's pride in me would overshadow any judgments they had about my identity.

The resources I had access to allowed me to create a bubble of safety around myself. As my capital increased, I was able to maneuver out of unsafe environments with more ease. Even in my youth, the resources my family had saved me and ensured that I wouldn't become lost in the prison pipeline that seized so many of my peers.

It's imperative that Black trans women's housing and safety be centered in mainstream conversations about public safety. Everyone deserves a home base, where they can reflect and find some solitude. If dogs are given houses, why wouldn't you do the same for a human being? Once safe housing is universally secured, other issues can be addressed. For instance, when we're talking about health disparities and illnesses like HIV, if a person doesn't have a home, where will their medications go? Where do they find care?

It's crucial to recognize that what happens in Atlanta isn't always indicative of what's going on in the rest of the state. In rural Georgia, it's a white man's club and it's important that government officials acknowledge the diversity of its constituency. In order to break out of the incessant cycles of imprisonment, houselessness, and violence, resources need to be poured back into our communities. We need schools, community centers, grocery stores and the like to help create new narratives of safety for the communities it has continuously eluded.

Black people are consistently trapped in systems that fail us. It is no wonder why we fight when all we are exposed to are hoods characterized by depravity and poor school systems. The neglect needs to end so we can realize a better future that recognizes everyone's humanity."

- JUSTINE INGRAM



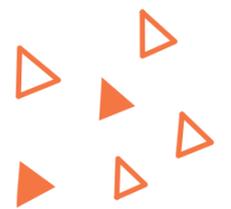
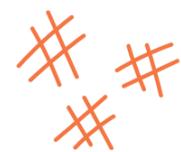
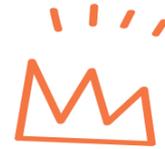
Illustration by SOFAHOOD



HISTORY OF REFORMIST

AND/OR ABOLITIONIST EFFORTS IN ATLANTA

Abolition is not a cause that SNaP Co. envisioned alone. We are not the first – and certainly not the last – voices to take up arms in this fight to imagine a new, freer, safer world. It is important to note that not all past efforts have been abolitionist. Police reformists conceive of a world where the police can be trained to stop the systemic brutalization of communities. An abolitionist world is difficult for many to envisage but it is the only answer. The deaths of Amir Locke and Breonna Taylor, both murdered by police acting on no-knock warrants, happened within a year of each other – reform is not the cure. A force that was created for the sole purpose of oppression cannot be rebuilt, it must be toppled; and no, racism cannot be distilled from the police force because that’s what it was borne out of. The path we traverse has been tread before by reformists and abolitionists alike and it is imperative that we actively engage with the past to understand how we might actualize our abolitionist future.



1920s

ORGANIZING FOR POLICE REFORM

The Commission on Interracial Cooperation, a biracial organization that attempted to improve conditions under Jim Crow, documented 31 cases of police brutality against Black residents in hopes of strengthening their case for hiring Black police officers. This study proved that police were incentivized to harass Black Atlantans and faced little to no repercussions when caught.

Atlanta’s leading Black churches and other civil organizations organized around police brutality and filed a petition to hire Black officers. Orgs like the NAACP, the Atlanta Urban League, and the Atlanta Negro Chamber of Commerce argued the same.

1937

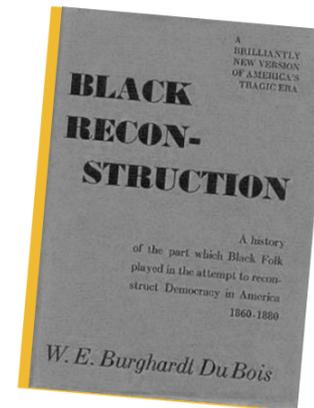
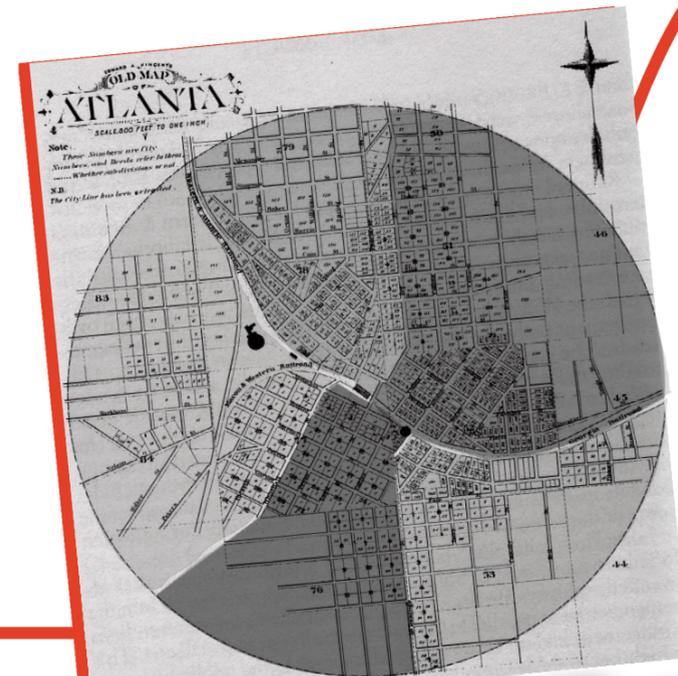
REED REPORT

A study of Atlanta and Fulton County governments found that Atlanta’s government and police departments were riddled with politics and corruption— recommending major reforms to the police departments including a police disciplinary committee. Again the proposed solutions were band-aid fixes.

LATE 1800S

ESTABLISHMENT OF ATLANTA POLICE DEPARTMENT

Political reformers sought to improve policing, under the belief that with better training and leadership, Atlanta police could wreak less havoc on the city. They lobbied for a new city charter that officially created Atlanta’s police department, removed it from the control of Atlanta’s Board of Aldermen, and placed it under the control of a five-member Board of Commissioner, one commissioner for each of Atlanta’s five wards. This Board governed the police department, while the police chief operated as a mere figurehead.



W.E.B. DU BOIS'S BLACK RECONSTRUCTION IN AMERICA

After returning to Atlanta to accept an academic position at Atlanta University, W.E.B., Du Bois published Black Reconstruction in America. He wrote about “abolition-democracy” advocating for the removal of institutions rooted in racist and repressive practices, including prisons, convict leasing, and white police forces. He believed what we know to be true, which is that systems derived from our enslavement could never be sources of justice.

In 1946, Black members of the Georgia Teachers and Education Association petitioned the mayor and city council. Three hundred Black WWII veterans marched in front of city hall.

The next year, Black Atlantans formed a Negro Police Committee to hire Black police officers hoping that more racial representation would equate to empathetic policing. That wasn’t the case.

1935

1940s





1950-1970

A SERIES OF POLICE SCANDALS CONTINUE

1957

Police Racketeering Scandal: Led the Police Aldermanic Committee to pass a resolution establishing the department's first police advisory board which was later abandoned.



BLACK LEADERSHIP IN ATLANTA

1974

Atlanta Mayor Maynard Jackson attempted to fire the white police chief, John Inman, and created the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council to administer funds to police, court, and community agencies to combat crime.

In his third term, Jackson reorganized the police bureau—Jackson's task force recommended abolishing the Department of Public Safety and its Public Safety Commissioner and transforming the police bureau back into a department.

1970-1980

1984

ATLANTA CITY CIVILIAN REVIEW BOARD CREATED



ADVOCACY IN RESPONSE TO THE POLICE MURDER KATHRYN JOHNSTON

Undercover police officers killed an 88-year-old Black woman in her home in a "botched" raid. The officers used a **no-knock warrant** and police fired 39 shots at Johnston.

One officer planted marijuana in Johnston's house after the shooting and falsified a basis for the raid.

2006

A week after the shooting, over 200 people held a rally in Johnston's neighborhood and community members demanded justice, pointing to this instance as an example of the police department's poor treatment of people living in low-income neighborhoods.

The officers were charged and convicted. Additionally, Johnston's family sued the APD and received 4.9 million in a settlement.

More broadly, changes to the police department were made including oversight and investigation of a "culture of misconduct" within APD including falsification and quotas. APD's use of no-knock warrants was also heavily scrutinized.



1965

Policy Lottery Scandal: Led the Board of Alderman to pass an ordinance to create an Internal Security Division (known as the Security Squad) that was only responsible to the Police Aldermanic Committee bypassing the chief.

1970

Police Corruption Scandal: Led police force to establish Department of Internal Affairs and the Board of Aldermen to approve restructuring the bureau into four major divisions.

None of these efforts would result in major change for Atlantans nor a reduction in police brutality.

Black representation in city politics contributing to police policy and reform:

Since 1973, Black mayors have governed Atlanta and its city council has held a Black majority since 1977-2001.

From 1973 to 1981, except for seven- months, Atlanta's top police administrator was African-American.

1950-1970



1970-1980

QUEER SPACES BEGIN TO FLOURISH

Queer spaces and organizations begin to flourish and organize in Atlanta. We have TILTT, LeGender, Zami Nobla, AALGA (African American Lesbian Gay Alliance), Black Pride Atlanta events, Safe Space at Morehouse, Adore, Blackout, blossoming as early queer organizations.

1990s-2000s

ADVOCACY IN RESPONSE TO THE POLICE RAID OF ATLANTA EAGLE

On September 10, 2009, a paramilitary SWAT-like force of the Atlanta Police Department stormed into a gay bar, "Atlanta Eagle" without a warrant. Police forced dozens of innocent customers to lie face-down on the floor simply because they were patrons of the bar. Patrons were illegally searched, had their IDs confiscated and their names entered into a police computer. The police harassed the patrons for an extended amount of time. At the end of the raid, not a single patron was charged with a crime.

In response, lawyers and legal organizations filed a civil rights lawsuit against the City of Atlanta and the police.

The lawsuit reached a settlement that required the APD to discontinue its unlawful practice of conducting ID and warrant checks and also put in place misconduct deterrence and accountability measures.

The settlement **required the City of Atlanta to pay over a million dollars.** The court found that the Plaintiffs had been unlawfully searched, detained, and/or arrested.

2009



2013

ADVOCACY IN RESPONSE TO THE PROSTITUTION BAN

Coalition groups, including SNaP Co. led a grassroots organizing campaign to defeat a banishment ordinance targeting sex workers in Midtown Atlanta.

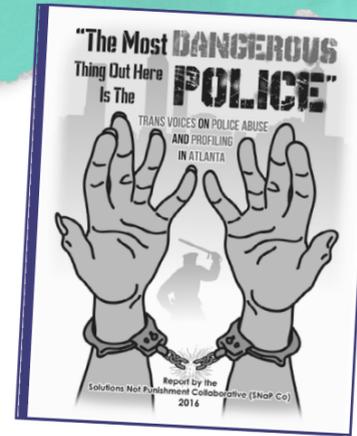
Mayor Kasim Reed put forth a proposal to banish prostitutes from certain parts of the City of Atlanta. The ordinance was known as the Stay Out of Areas of Prostitution (SOAP) ordinance.

Activists were blindsided when the city council of Atlanta passed the SOAP ordinance on January 29, 2013— they didn't even know it was being considered.



2015

SNaP Co. released the report "The Most Dangerous Thing Out Here is the Police," resulting in the Mayor's decision to appoint the first openly trans member to the Atlanta Civilian Police Review Board



2019-2020

CLOSE THE JAIL ATL

RJAC and Women on the Rise, co-leaders of the **Communities Over Cages: Close the Jail ATL Campaign** won legislation to close the city's "extra" jail and repurpose it into a Center for Wellness & Freedom through a community-led task force, the **Reimagine ACDC Taskforce**

In June 2020, protesters marched from Atlanta City Hall to the Atlanta City Detention Center demanding to close the detention center.

2020

MURDER OF GEORGE FLOYD/DEFUND THE POLICE MOVEMENT AND THE KILLING OF RAYSHARD BROOKS IN ATLANTA

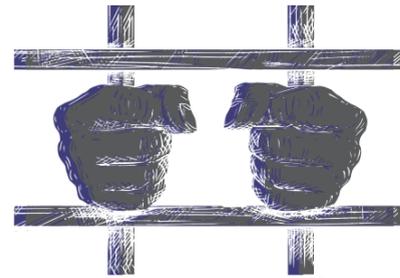
On June 12, 2020, Rayshard Brooks, a 27-year-old Black man was murdered by APD. The community demanded justice.

On June 13, Atlanta's police chief Erika Shields resigned.

On June 20, Atlanta City Council narrowly voted down an ordinance that would have withheld \$73 million of the Atlanta Police.



RJAC and the SNaP Co. sponsored the People's Proposal program calling for an Atlanta Pre-Booking Diversion Program for Street Level Sex Work Offenses, to redirect sex workers to community-based treatment and support services. The goal was to funnel people to services and not jail.



RJAC led a grassroots coalition that established the **Atlanta / Fulton County Pre-Arrest Diversion Initiative**, designed by people directly affected by policing and incarceration

The following year, Mayor Keisha Lance Bottoms ends Atlanta's contract with ICE in 2018.

2017

Atlanta Police Department and the Police Department's office showed at the time that in 2012, Atlanta's arrest-only approach resulted in over 1,400 arrests for solicitation. Only 300 of the 1,400 were john arrests, while 1,100 were solicitation arrests of sex workers.

The coalition included organizations; LaGender, Women on the Rise, Georgians For Alternatives to the Death Penalty, Atlanta Harm Reduction Coalition, Trans(forming), Occupy Atlanta's Women Caucus, and Transgender Individuals Living Their Truth, Inc.

2013

2019-2020



DEEPER THAN VISIBILITY



TALE FROM THE TRENCHES:

ON WHETHER ABOLITION IS REALISTIC

"I would say I'm a student of abolition. I'm still reading and working to fully understand abolition but I do believe that the movement to #DefundThePolice is actually a reasonable thing and policy mandate. Taking from the only budget that goes up every year, and saying, 'Well, why don't we try to address, you know, approximate causes or root causes?' That all feels very doable and effective. There's a study that comes out and shows that poverty and mental health and addiction are some driving factors. Why do we use that information to turn around and lock people up versus actually doing away with poverty and addressing addiction. It would make sense for us to redistribute from a public safety budget towards things that make us safer, so to speak. **The greatest needs in my community are transportation, mental health care, addiction, support for sexual assault survivors, quality, affordable housing and jobs.** So I am a strong believer in allocating budgets towards our greatest needs.

But I think in general, I think there's a lack of equity in housing, and even stuff like zoning, that fuels poverty and injustice. And when you start talking about solutions, suddenly people have concerns that don't actually make any of us safer. You know, these folks who are well off don't want quads in their neighborhood, stuff like that. These people

say that they want to be safe but then they don't want their lives to be inconvenienced at all. When we throw out solutions to homelessness and youth crime, they start talking about property values and their investments. And it's like, what you're really saying is, you don't want certain people in your neighborhood. Some people truly believe that certain people can never be good and that their presence is always negative. **We have to get rid of the idea that we're better than others or we'll never take care of one another the way we need to.** We'll never use our budgets to help everyone if we don't think they deserve it. But we do. We all deserve it. And it's what keeps us all safe."

- JACOB



Illustration by SOFAHOOD

WHAT IS SAFETY TO US?

A 2021 SURVEY ON A SAFER ATLANTA

A Safer Atlanta is the brainchild of the Solutions Not Punishment Collaborative (SNaP Co.) that aims to elucidate community residents and business owners and their experiences with local policies and law enforcement (particularly with the 4 predominant counties around the City of Atlanta). With a war in Ukraine, to economic and pandemic chaos, law enforcement has continued to be an interruptive force that has taken lives of Black community members. With the hopes of envisioning A Safer Atlanta where community members know what it takes to safeguard their communities and neighborhoods without the aggravation of the police. SNaP Co.'s aspiration is to change the current climate by providing research and creating a media campaign that projects the stories of why it's important to ensure the safety of Black community residents who currently live with fear of

death by law enforcement. SNaP Co. is working with Contract Liberation for consultancy and research development and analysis for this exploratory mixed-methods study, which includes the survey, A Safer Atlanta. The final analysis and report will be made available for public consumption along with being a major document for other organizations as a reference when it comes to shifting police culture.



Purpose

The purpose of this research is to evaluate Atlanta's policing culture through the eyes of community residents in the 4 closest counties to the City of Atlanta; Fulton, DeKalb, Cobb, & Clayton. After the murder of Rayshard Brookes, we were curious about the real stories of how law enforcement are affecting Black communities and how the communities think of alternative ways of keeping our people safe. SNaP Co. suspects that the law enforcement policies are negatively impacting local residents, so what are the ways that community members can envision an alternative Atlanta?

Through a partnership with the Movement for Black Lives, SNaP Co. hired 11 Freedom Fellows to

- Document, analyze, and project local residents' experiences and perceptions of their local law enforcement
- Extract community residents' ideas on safeguarding communities to inform politicians and the policies that are impacting the residents
- Inform the public and politicize Black people on shifting policing culture so that proper policies can be put into place for the well-being of the community residents

Survey Results

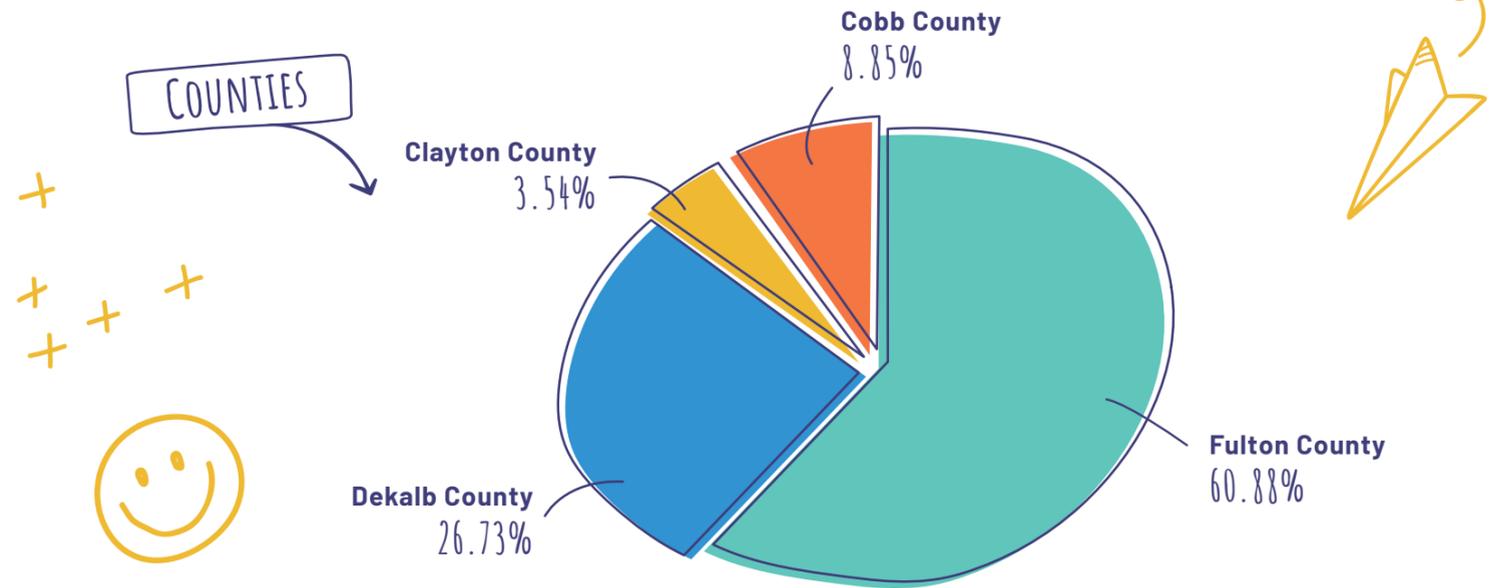
There is an overall air of ambivalence towards what to do about law enforcement in Black communities. Some respondents feel like there isn't an alternative to community safety and some respondents feel like defunding the police and abolishing the police are the way to go. Other ideas that were thrown out there, which include, but not limited to:

- Police officers policing the communities they live in
- Community members safeguarding their own communities
- Community members using transformative and restorative justice systems to right wrongs
- Defunding the police and shifting resources towards looming community needs
- Education around police abolition
- Law enforcement compliance
- Dedicated resources to the betterment of communities

After centuries of recycling these types of reform practices, it forces us to think about how to move in the future and what it will look like to manage our own communities.

In-Depth Findings

It was a requirement for survey takers to live in one of the four required counties: Fulton, DeKalb, Cobb, and Clayton. If they did not live in any of these counties, they were taken out of the survey. Their zip code was also used to enforce their place in one of these four counties. Most participants came from Fulton County, followed by DeKalb, Cobb, and Clayton, respectively.



Most respondents feel that law enforcement should respond to violence-related calls and that there should be alternative teams, organizations, or communities that are equipped to handle non-violent calls. Although people have heard of alternative methods of justice, it still feels unfamiliar for residents and the need to flush those ideas out is what is needed for them to feel confident about the process and lessening their reliance on law enforcement. There is a bit of ambivalence about what to do about law enforcement; not confident about abolition, but also not confident in law enforcement's ability to mitigate violence.

Out of the 565 respondents who lived in these qualifying counties:

- 76.99% (435) of them said that they could call on someone who was not law enforcement.
- 21.95% (124) of them said that they did not have anyone they could call.
- 1.06% (6) of them marked "Other." Answers included that it depended on the situation or need or that they didn't know.

It is beautiful to know that our communities are developing insular ways of keeping one another safe. We should all have people we can count on outside of law enforcement. When we become too dependent on outsourcing mediation and conflict resolution, we lose sight of the community ties that most protect us.



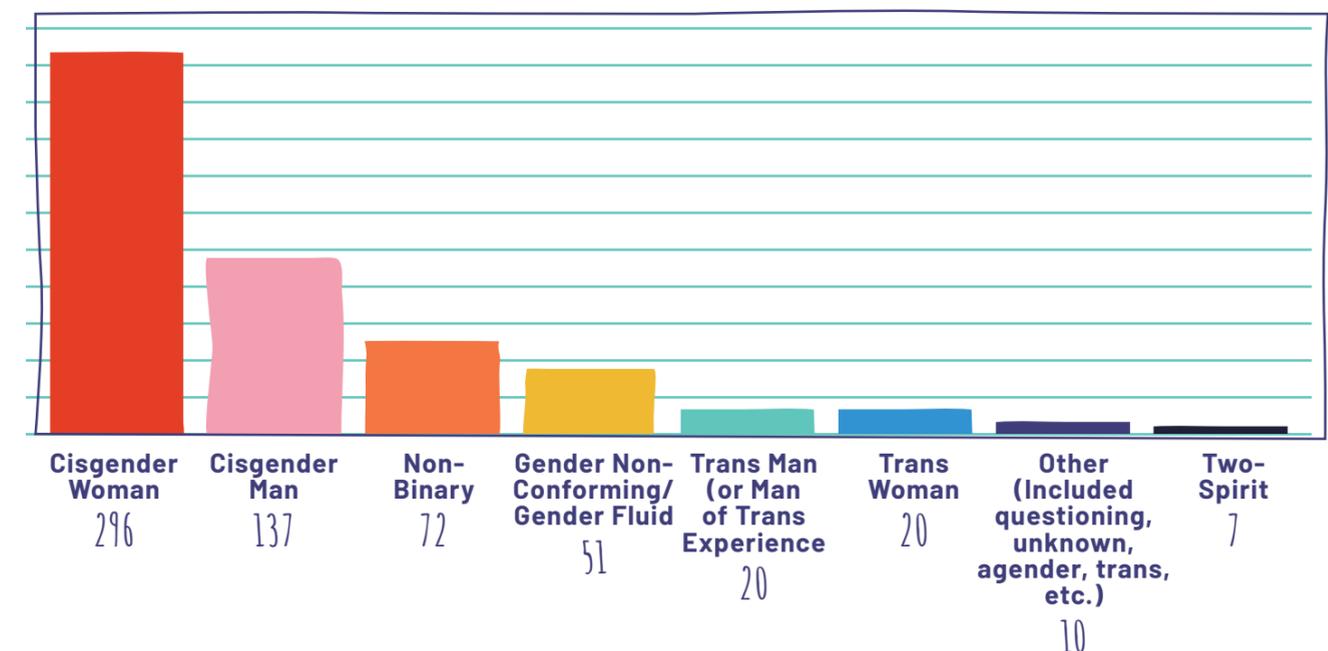
Since 2017, the City of Atlanta partnered with our Policing and Alternatives & Diversion (PAD) to divert people from the Atlanta City Detention Center (Pre-trial). The PAD Initiative was created by Atlantans and for Atlantans – especially those directly impacted by policing and incarceration – to develop new approaches to community safety and wellness. In 2020, we launched ATL311 which creates an accessible way to seek support without attracting militarized attention. After evaluating years of 911 data, as well as community listening sessions, it has become clear that many people call 911 when they feel they have no other options. From trash pick up to substance abuse concerns to mental health crises, ATL311 is a one-stop shop for nonviolent, quality of life community needs. By investing in a range of options for community members, we unburden law enforcement and provide safer alternatives for Atlantans.

Demographics

Demographical data was captured to see if some identities were more prone to being arrested or having interactions with law enforcement, as well as other significant trends in the data. There were 565 respondents who answered demographic questions.

GENDER IDENTITY

RESPONDENTS WERE GIVEN SEVEN CHOICES FOR GENDER IDENTITY AND THEN AN OPTION OF "OTHER" THAT THEY COULD WRITE IN IF IT WASN'T THERE.

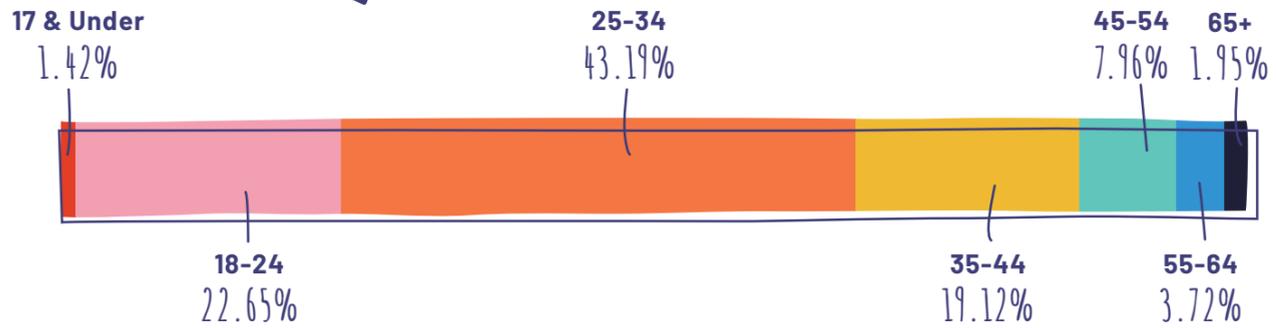


Demographics (cont.)



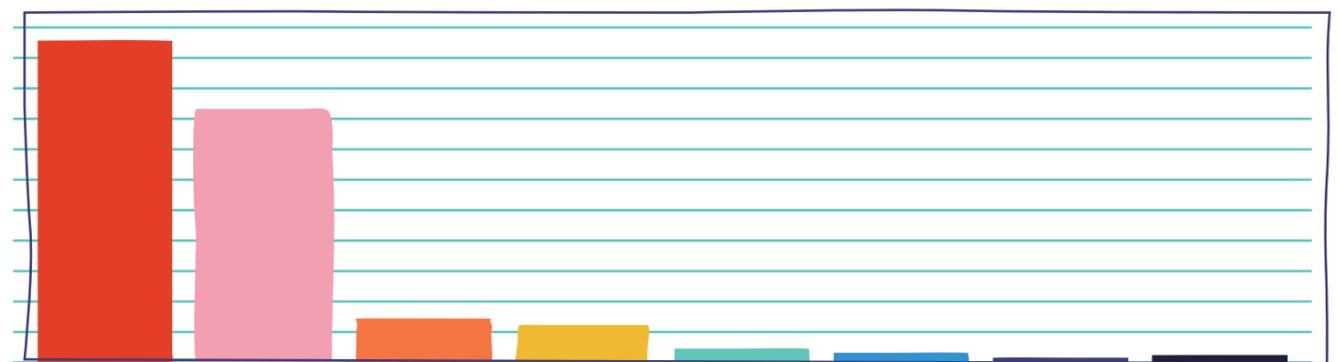
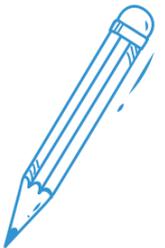
AGE

THERE WAS NOT AN AGE RESTRICTION ON THIS SURVEY. MOST RESPONDENTS (84.96%) FELL BETWEEN THE AGES OF 18 AND 44 WITH THE HIGHEST RESPONDENTS AGED BETWEEN 25 AND 34 (43.19%).



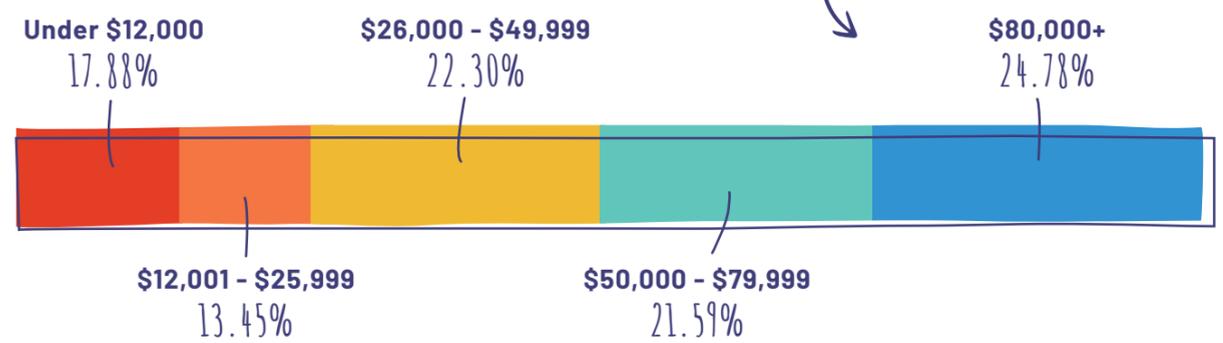
RACE

MOST RESPONDENTS IDENTIFIED AS BLACK OR AFRICAN AMERICAN (53.45%). RESPONDENTS COULD SELECT ALL THE RACES THEY IDENTIFY WITH IN THIS QUESTION. THIS IS A VERY SIMILAR SNAPSHOT, AS ATLANTA HAS A BLACK POPULATION OF 50.95%.³



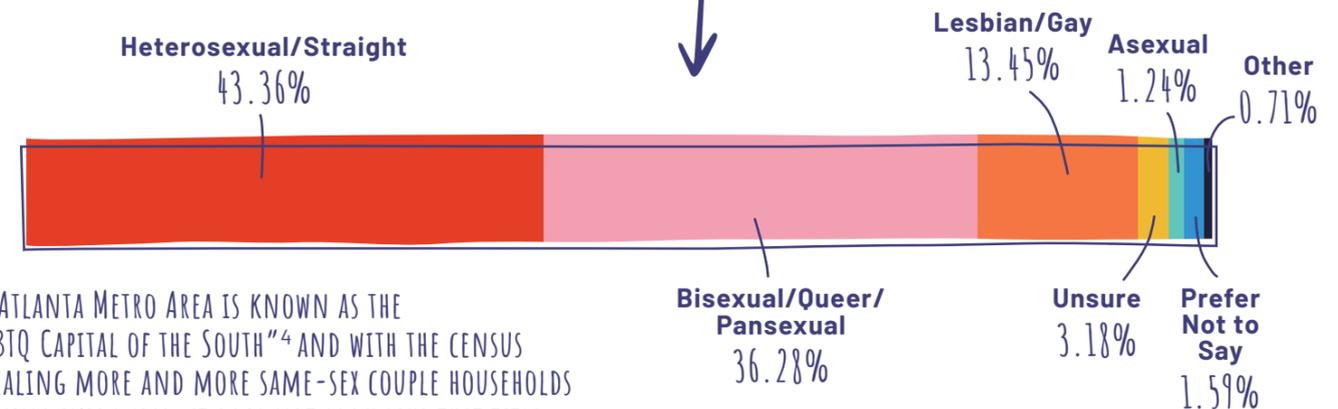
MOST RESPONDENTS HAD A HOUSEHOLD INCOME OF OVER \$80K (24.78%). THE MEDIAN INCOME OF ATLANTA METRO AREA RESIDENTS IS \$55,733.¹

HOUSEHOLD INCOME

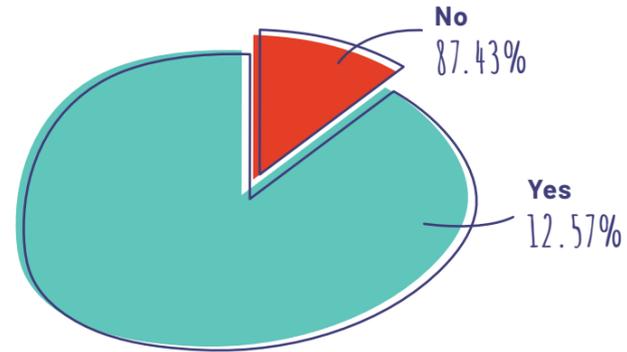


SEXUAL ORIENTATION

MOST RESPONDENTS IDENTIFIED AS BEING PART OF THE LGBTQ+ (LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL, QUEER, ASEXUAL, AND MORE) SEXUAL ORIENTATION SPECTRUM (50.97%).



DISABILITY



MOST RESPONDENTS WERE NON-DISABLED. OF THOSE 71 RESPONDENTS WHO WERE DISABLED (12.57%), IT WAS NOT REFLECTED IN GEORGIA'S OVERALL NUMBER OF PEOPLE WHO ARE DISABLED (27.2%).²

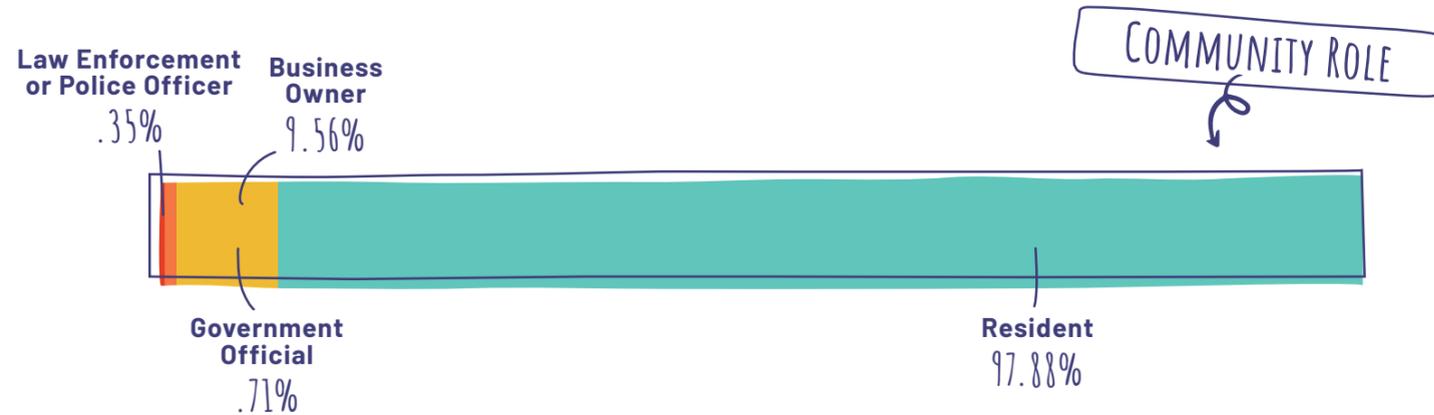
THE ATLANTA METRO AREA IS KNOWN AS THE "LGBTQ CAPITAL OF THE SOUTH"⁴ AND WITH THE CENSUS REVEALING MORE AND MORE SAME-SEX COUPLE HOUSEHOLDS GROWING EVERY YEAR, IT DOES NOT LOOK LIKE THAT TITLE WILL NOT BE RELEVANT ANYTIME SOON.⁵

1. Income changes in metro Atlanta - atlanta regional commission. (n.d.). Retrieved from http://documents.atlantaregional.com/snapshots/income_fullpres_final.pdf
 2. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2021, June 28). Disability & Health U.S. State Profile Data: Georgia. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Retrieved February 25, 2022, from <https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/disabilityandhealth/impacts/georgia.html>

3. Georgia population 2022. Atlanta, Georgia Population 2022 (Demographics, Maps, Graphs). (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://worldpopulationreview.com/us-cities/atlanta-ga-population/>
 4. D. (2019, October 14). Atlanta still LGBTQ Capital of South, but census reveals decline in households. SaportaReport. Retrieved from <https://saportareport.com/atlanta-still-lgbtq-capital-of-south-but-census-reveals-decline-in-households/sections/reports/david/>
 5. U. S. C. (2021, October 8). Male couples make up majority of same-sex households in large cities but not nationwide. Census.gov

Role in the Community

Most respondents were residents in the community. It was a very intentional choice to focus this survey on residents, business owners, and government officials. Those who identified as a police officer or someone in law enforcement were taken out of the survey after answering this question. This question was asked as an additional buffer, just in case they did not read the directions at the beginning of this survey.



Safe in Metro Atlanta

When it came to feeling safe in Atlanta, 542 respondents had the chance to answer these questions. The top five greatest problems in respondent's communities are:

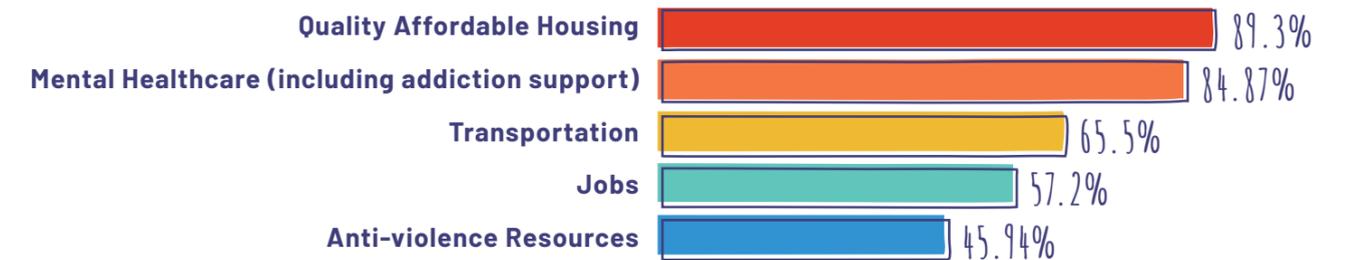


With homelessness named as a public safety priority, little is said about transgender workers who are at a greater risk for unemployment and poverty and are nearly four times more likely than the population to have a household income of under \$10,000, according to the National LGBTQ Taskforce. Trans women of color turn to survival sex work because of the lack of economic opportunities and other resources. In a joint report by three national organizations, 41% of Black trans people surveyed said they had experienced homelessness in their lives. There's also the broader housing affordability issue in Atlanta, which leads to trans and queer people becoming victims to slumlords and subject to living in unsafe conditions.

Besides the problems that we named in the survey, other issues that the community named included:



The greatest needs in the community were indicated as:



Trans and Queer communities of color live in a constant state of fear of violence. Last year, at least 44 Trans and Queer people died nationwide, most Black and Latinx. This was the largest number the Human Rights Campaign has recorded in 9 years. This past year (2021), may have surpassed last year's (2020) tragic record, with 28 deaths as of June. Most of these deaths are caused by transphobic violence, as the murderers are often cisgender males who react violently to the victim's identity and have access to firearms.

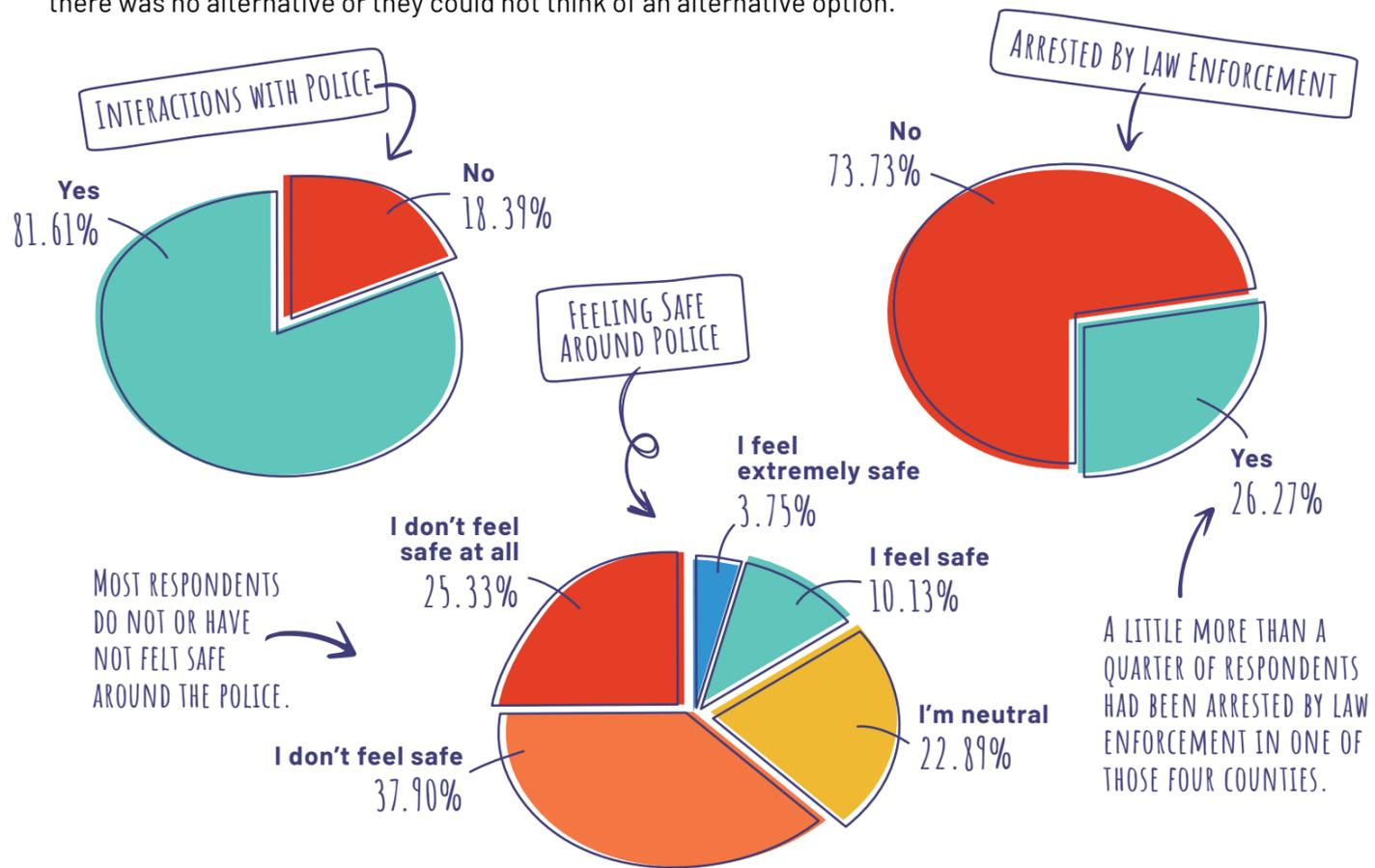
Despite having a large Black Trans and Queer community, Atlanta has seen its share of fatal violence targeted at trans people, and Black trans women are particularly vulnerable. On January 17, Bianca "Muffin" Bankz, a Black transgender woman, was shot and killed inside her apartment near Joseph E Boone. In 2017, Tee Tee

Dangerfield, a Black Trans woman, was shot and killed near her home in College Park, after leaving a club on Old National Highway. Shaneku McCurthy, LaTea Tiger, Nino Fortson, and most recently Sophie Vasquez and Serenity Hollis are victims of violence around Atlanta. Their names are still unspoken and unheard. Our youth are also at risk of violence. On June 18, 2021, Tyler, a 12-year-old boy who resides in Bankhead/Center Hill of Atlanta, Georgia, was abused and beaten by at least four people towering over him while another person filmed the abuse on Instagram live.

We know these are not isolated incidents – families, adoption agencies, and school systems have been practicing this form of humiliation and abuse against trans and queer youth for decades. We would like city officials to elevate this issue and take a firm stand against anti-trans violence that helps make the issue part of the public discourse. We would like to see trans and queer people explicitly included in conversations around domestic violence resources, including city programs and efforts.

Experiences with the Police

Most respondents **(435) had some kind of interaction with the police (81.61%)**. In the interview data, we learned that the interactions ranged from being arrested to calling the police when a situation escalated and there was no alternative or they could not think of an alternative option.



Out of those 140 respondents that had been arrested, 123 respondents told us what their charge was for being arrested. These reasons included the following:

- AGGRAVATED BATTERY WITH DEADLY WEAPON
- ARMED ROBBERY
- ASSAULT
- ATTEMPTING TO ELUDE THE POLICE
- BATTERY
- BATTERY ON POLICE OFFICER
- BURGLARY
- CHILD ENDANGERMENT
- CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE
- DESTRUCTION OF PROPERTY
- DISORDERLY CONDUCT
- DISTURBING THE PEACE
- DOMESTIC DISTURBANCE
- DRAG RACING
- DRIVING UNDER THE INFLUENCE (DUI)
- DRIVING WITHOUT REGISTRATION
- FAILURE TO APPEAR
- FAILURE TO DISPERSE
- FORGERY
- IDLING & LOITERING FOR ILLICIT SEX ACTS
- INTENT TO SELL
- INVALID/EXPIRED LICENSE
- JAYWALKING
- MINOR INTOXICATION
- MISDEMEANOR
- MURDER
- NO IDENTIFICATION
- NOT SIGNING A CITATION
- OBSTRUCTING TRAFFIC
- OBSTRUCTION OF JUSTICE
- OUTSTANDING WARRANT
- PARK AFTER DARK
- PEDESTRIAN IN THE ROADWAY
- PETTY THEFT
- POSSESSION (MARIJUANA, COCAINE)
- POSSESSION OF FIRE ARMS WITHOUT A PERMIT
- PROPERTY DAMAGE
- PROSTITUTION
- PUBLIC INTOXICATION
- RECKLESS DRIVING
- RESISTING ARREST
- SEXUAL BATTERY
- SHOPLIFTING
- SLEEPING IN THE PARK
- SPEEDING
- STORE VIOLATION
- SUSPENDED LICENSE
- TRAFFIC TICKETS
- TRESPASSING
- UNDERAGE DRINKING
- UNPAID TICKET

The majority of folks interviewed said that they had been treated fairly by law enforcement when they were arrested. Fair treatment was indicated by how the arresting officers knew the respondent and what their past interactions were with law enforcement agencies. Figgy, a gender non-conforming person, experienced being treated unfairly at first, but then were treated more fairly once the law enforcement agency making their arrest realized Figgy's parent was previously a member of the agency. They stated,

I WOULD SAY INITIALLY I WAS TREATED UNFAIRLY. BUT THEN I WOULD SAY THAT AFTER LIKE, BEING PRIVILEGED ENOUGH TO HAVE FAMILY TO INTERVENE WITH FOR ME, THEN I WAS TREATED, HE, IT WAS PROBABLY, I WAS PROBABLY TREATED TOO WELL AFTER THAT FACT, HONESTLY, LIKE, I FEEL LIKE IT WAS A VERY MUCH LIKE, LIKE, BACKGROUND: MY GRANDFATHER WAS A POLICE OFFICER FOR THE CITY OF ATLANTA. AND LIKE, THAT HAD BENEFITS TO ME, RIGHT. LIKE, WHEN I GOT ARRESTED, NOBODY KNEW WHO I LIKE, IT DIDN'T MATTER. BUT WHEN MY GRANDPA BAILED ME OUT, HE CALLED HIS HOMIES AND LIKE, THINGS FELT LIGHTER AFTER THAT. AND I THINK THAT'S FUCKED UP. I JUST THINK IT'S ALL FUCKED UP. IT'S ALL FUCKED UP. AND I BENEFITED FROM THAT, LIKE, SO FUCKED UP.

This goes to show you that if you have connections in law enforcement, your experience is going to be better with regards to you being arrested and charged for a violation. Most of us do not have this positionality of having someone close to us being a part of a law enforcement agency where we can benefit from our connections. With that said, it is reflective of the American culture of “networking” to aid in someone’s defense.

Dorian, a Black agender gay person, stated that they were treated unfairly, but that it was just like the treatment of everyone else that was around him. They state that they were treated “Unfairly, but not differently than other people in that situation who are also black.” This goes to show what the perception and reality is for folks who are Black and their experiences around what it means to be treated unfairly when entering into the legal system.

Tina, a Black trans woman, had mixed experiences with law enforcement with some situations playing out far worse than others:

“I would say that that one time, was the only time that I was treated unfairly. And that was, well no, that time and then the time in Clayton County. So I would say that I’ve had two interactions where it was just like, you know, I felt like I was totally violated. Clayton County was the worst, though, it absolutely took the cake because I wouldn’t be a snitch.”

Again, this is a situation that was dependent on the situation at hand and whether or not it would benefit the arresting officer at hand. This also shows that some counties may have more negative effects on individuals than other counties; so that is also something to consider when it comes to being arrested and how you’ll be treated, particularly as a person who is cisgender, straight, white, wealthy, or a man. While the City has invested nearly one-third of its budget (\$230 million) into policing, Black people, especially trans people of color cannot rely on the police. According to a 2016 report released by SNaPCo, the vast majority of trans and gender non-conforming respondents do not trust the Atlanta Police Department. For many trans people of color, calling the police leads to more violence. In the report, 2 out of 5 trans women of color respondents (38%) reported being arrested after calling APD for help. 35% of trans women of color felt their lives were in danger while interacting with an APD officer, and several respondents reported being verbally, physically, and sexually assaulted by officers.

Immigration Experiences

When it came to their experiences around Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), there were 529 respondents who answered these questions. Of those respondents, 52 were immigrants (9.83%), with the majority of them being documented.



31 respondents said that they had some experiences with ICE. This includes:

- QUESTIONING AT THE BORDER
- HELPING UNDOCUMENTED FAMILIES STAY AT OUR HOME DURING ICE RAIDS IN THEIR APARTMENTS
- UNLAWFUL DETAINMENT OF FRIENDS
- FAMILY MEMBERS HAVE BEEN DEPORTED AFTER LIVING HERE FOR OVER 20+ YEARS
- ALMOST DEPORTATION FOR AN ASSUMPTION OF A CRIME
- HARASSMENT/THREATS
- ICE INMATE SUPPORT
- ICE SUV'S RIDING AROUND IN COMMUNITIES
- SHOWING UP FOR NO REAL REASON AT A HOUSE/EVENT/DEMONSTRATION/LIBRARY
- PROTESTING AGAINST ICE
- PRESSURE FROM JAIL DEPUTIES TO ADMIT THEIR STATUS TO INVOLVE ICE
- ICE HAS THREATENED TO ABDUCT MY FRIENDS.

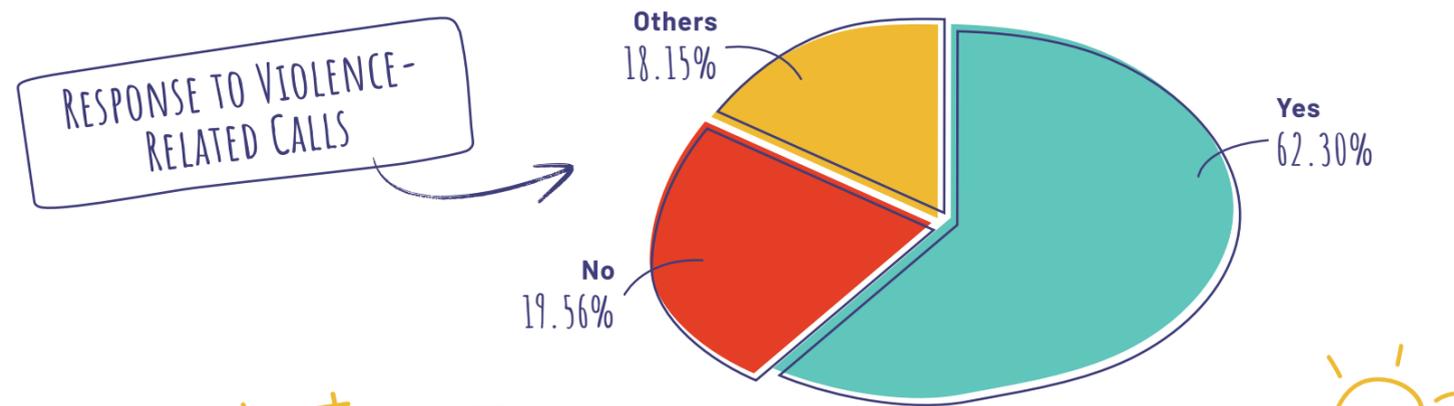
ICE was included in this survey because of its similarities and overlap to the current jailing system. Although Atlanta ended ICE contracts in 2018, leading to the closure of ACDC, ICE continues to detain immigrants in Clayton County. Working with a private prison, Clayton County is working to imprison immigrants despite human rights violations.⁶

6. Reilly, C., McDonald-Mosley, D. R., & Vasquez, T. (n.d.). Atlanta ended its ice contract. but a nearby facility quietly started jailing immigrants. Rewire News Group. Retrieved February 25, 2022. from <https://rewirenewsgroup.com/article/2018/12/14/atlanta-ended-ice-contract-nearby-georgia-started/>

Transgender Latinx folks working on obtaining documented immigration status are also unable to look to police for help. This is mainly due to fear of being deported or mistreated for being transgender. Further, many trans Latinx immigrants also experience language barriers as their primary language is either Spanish or a Native language, making advocating for themselves when interacting with law enforcement very difficult. As the evidence presents, despite Atlanta residents and constituents making progress to end violence against marginalized communities, other counties and surrounding Atlanta neighborhoods continue this path of violence against queer and trans Black and Latinx folks, worsening human rights violations. We see a similar dynamic play out in efforts to create new jails, and Buckhead's consistent attempts at splitting from the City of Atlanta in order to create their own police department. There are more spaces being created to incarcerate people and forcefully surveil and police them. Instead of addressing the root causes of why and how people harm one another, we are reacting to violence that we assume is destined to happen. This defeatist lens will only reproduce violence rather than reducing it.

Satisfaction with The Police & Government Policy

Most respondents believed that police should respond to violence-related calls (62.3%) and for many of the folks who selected the option of "other," they indicated that the police should also be accompanied with a social worker or mental health professional, or an organization specifically designed to address the issue at hand.



While some folks do not want the police handling any situation and want to abolish policing all together, others cannot think of an alternative to police. Some respondents felt that there should be other professionals responding to problems such as rape or domestic violence issues, and that police would be better off handling murders and/ or assaults. One survey respondent stated,

“DEPENDS ON THE SITUATION, ALL DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, RAPE AND ASSAULT CASES CAN BE VERY SENSITIVE AND POLICE ARE NOT THE BEST LINE OF DEFENSE. HOWEVER, SOMETIMES THEY ARE THE ONLY LINE OF DEFENSE IN PLACES LACKING THE NECESSARY INFRASTRUCTURE TO INTERVENE OTHERWISE.”

79.44% of respondents felt that the police should not respond to non-violent calls. For the respondents who indicated, "Other," there were ideas that other social workers or mental health professionals or organizations that could respond with the police or without the police. However, there were some answers that we thought should be taken into consideration:

- SOMETIMES THEY MAY BE HELPFUL AND IT WOULD BE HELPFUL TO HAVE OTHER AGENCIES/AUTHORITIES TO MANAGE NON-VIOLENT SITUATIONS
- NOT SURE. I DON'T WANT TO RESPOND TO THE CALLS AND I AM A SOCIAL WORKER.
- THEY PERHAPS COULD ANSWER CALLS IN TANDEM WITH REPRESENTATIVES FROM ANOTHER ORGANIZATION/OFFICE
- I BELIEVE THEY SHOULD RESPOND TO CALLS DISTURBING THE PEACE. SOMEONE BEING IN HARD DRUGS AND MAKING A SCENE, HOMELESS MAN REFUSING TO LEAVE BUSINESS PROPERTY AND MAKING A SCENE AFTER BOTHERING CUSTOMERS"



In the interviews, interviewees had many different ideas about what kinds of calls the police should respond to. One participant, Dorian, wanted the police abolished all together and offered their advice on what police should be responding to:

WELL, AT THIS POINT, I DON'T THINK THEY SHOULD RESPOND TO ANY CALLS. I THINK THAT THEY SHOULD BE 100% ABOLISHED AND DISBANDED. AND WE CAN FIND OTHER SOLUTIONS THAT ARE NOT THEM IN BUT THAT'S JUST MAINLY IN THEORY, I GUESS IN PRACTICE, IF THEY'RE STILL GOING TO BE HERE, IT SHOULD DEFINITELY BE ANYTHING LIFE THREATENING. NOTHING INVOLVING MENTAL HEALTH UNLESS IT'S UNLESS IT IS EXTREMELY LIFE THREATENING.

Many respondents felt the same and when it came to mental health issues, participants want an alternative to the police. J stated,

NOW IN REGARDS TO LIKE A MENTAL HEALTH ISSUE, I DON'T FEEL THAT THEY SHOULD BE BROUGHT OUT THERE BECAUSE, YOU GUYS IT'S LIKE YOU GOT ALREADY TO MENTALLY UNSTABLE PEOPLE BE HONEST WITH YOU, BECAUSE A POLICE OFFICER CAN SAY THEY MENTALLY STABLE BUT THE LEAST A LITTLE BIT OF THING CAN TRIGGER THEM FROM NICE GUY INTO ATTACK MODE... I THINK YOU SHOULD HAVE A MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS COUNSELOR OUT THERE ON THE SPOT TO HELP YOU KNOW, ALONG WITH LAW ENFORCEMENT IF NEED BE, BUT IT SHOULD BE ON STANDBY... THEN IF YOU SEE THAT THIS PERSON HAS A WEAPON OR SOMETHING THAT'S GOING TO HARM THEMSELVES, THE POLICE SHOULD BE TRAINED TO USE NON LETHAL TACTICS.

There were some respondents that weren't sure when the police should be called and this was a real cause for concern. RJ gave several examples of when they should be called, but then as they thought about it, became increasingly more unable to know for sure what that would look like or what the police capability would look like when they got there. RJ states,

I'M NOT SURE WHERE I THINK THEY SHOULD BE CALLED. IT'S SOMETHING I'M THINKING ABOUT OFTEN. I CAN GIVE AN EXAMPLE OF LIKE, WHEN I WANTED TO CALL THE POLICE AND I BUT I WAS JUST LIKE, I KNOW, THEY CAN'T DO SHIT. IT MAKES IT... THAT'S WHAT I FIND MYSELF, IS LIKE, IF THE POLICE ARE CALLED, WHAT CAN THEY ACTUALLY DO ABOUT THIS? AND I'M NOT CLEAR ON WHEN I THINK THEY SHOULD BE CALLED AT THIS POINT. I THINK THAT THERE'S OFTENTIMES SOME OTHER ENTITY THAT CAN BE CALLED THAT WILL CONTRIBUTE TO SOLVING THE ISSUE, RATHER THAN ESCALATING IT.

This is important when thinking about the politicization of Black communities and having them understand when or when not to call the police. Having a clear vision is going to be ever-present if people want to envision a safer Atlanta.

Most survey respondents felt that law enforcement should be active. For those who offered an alternative in the "other" category, there were many statements that should be brought into the conversation about how folks felt about arresting youth, which had a wide variety of range:

DEPENDING ON THE SITUATION AT THE TIME

YES, BUT YOUTH SHOULD HAVE PROGRAMS ON BUSINESS THEY ARE RUNNING AND GIVEN PERMITS. LEO [LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICER] SHOULD ENFORCE HAVING A PERMIT ONLY.

NOT QUITE SURE IF I UNDERSTAND THIS QUESTION BUT I DO NOT THINK YOUTH SHOULD BE ARRESTED AND SENT TO JUVENILE CENTERS, BUT INSTEAD SHOULD BE GIVEN RESOURCES AND PROPER SUPPORT

IDK [I DON'T KNOW], BECAUSE I DON'T KNOW WHAT THE OTHER OPTIONS ARE

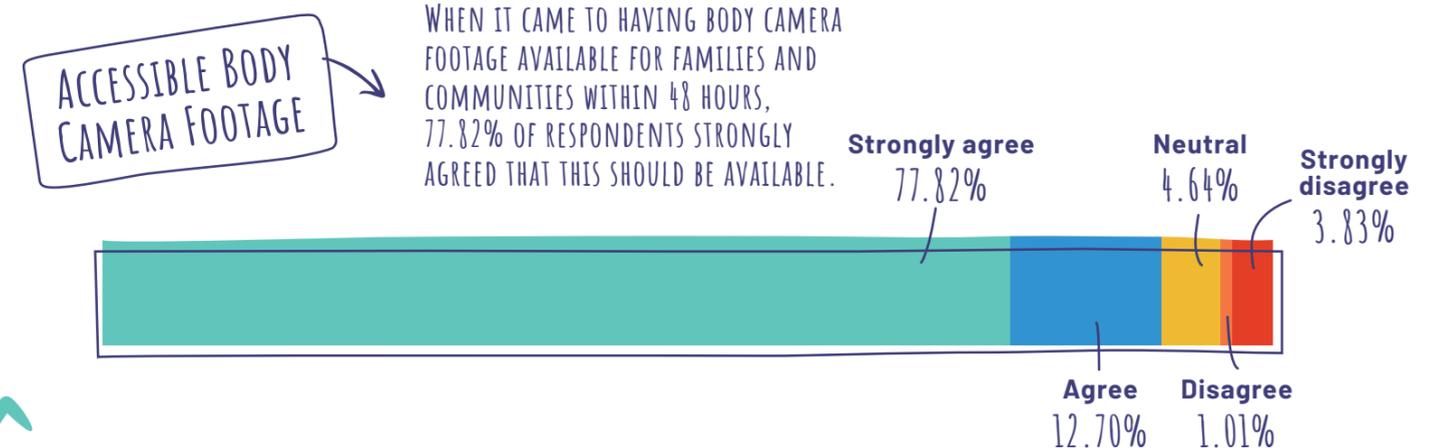
THEY ARE NOT BEING ARRESTED

IF THEY ARE DEVIANT THEN SOMETHING MUST BE DONE.

I DON'T BELIEVE CHILDREN SHOULD BE ARRESTED UNLESS THEY ARE ENGAGED IN VIOLENT CRIMES

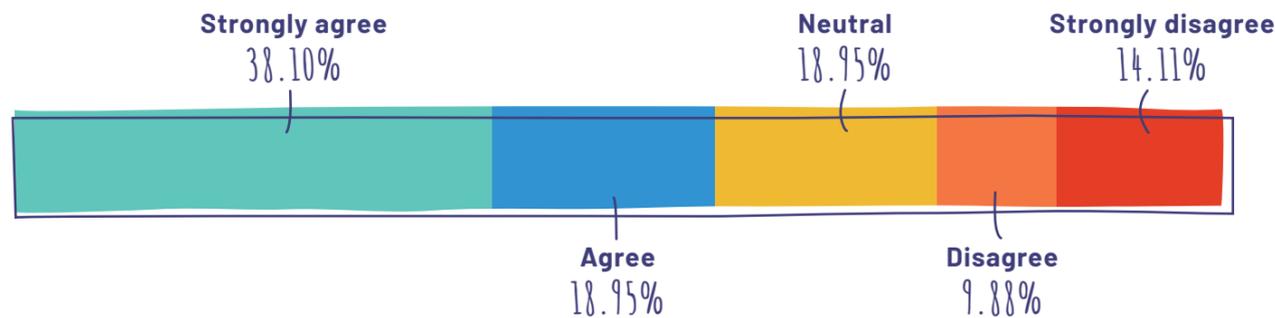
THEY NEED INTERVENTION, MAYBE ANTI DELINQUENCY PROGRAMS

Despite the Atlanta Metro Area having a number of youth programs, the need for more youth programs is apparent so that the youth can get the mentorship and resources they need to be productive citizens.

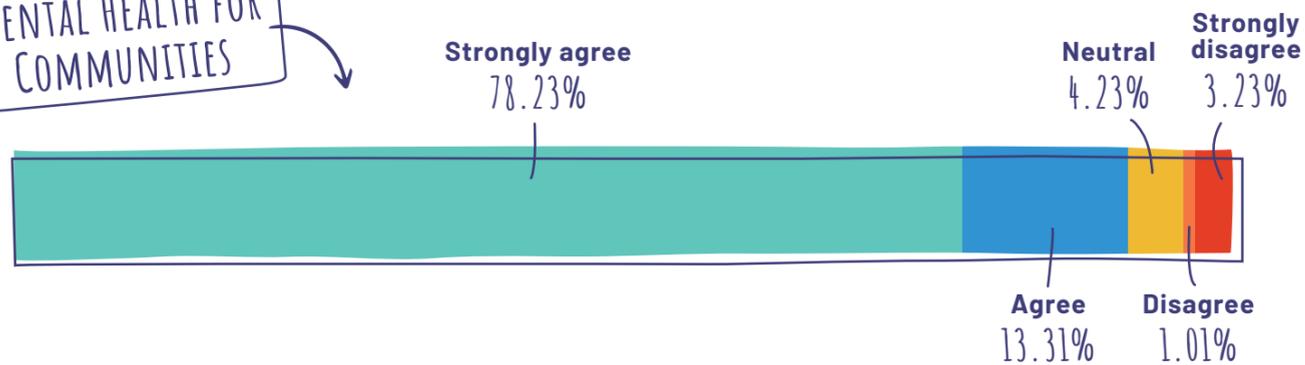


MENTAL HEALTH FOR POLICE

MOST RESPONDENTS ALSO AGREED THAT TAXPAYERS' MONEY SHOULD PAY FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT'S MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES AND THE COMMUNITY'S MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES TO IMPROVE COMMUNITY SAFETY.



MENTAL HEALTH FOR COMMUNITIES



John, who was for it, stated,

“YOU NEVER KNOW THE STATE OF MIND OF POLICE OFFICERS” WHICH IS THE REASON THAT WE SHOULD BE INVESTING IN THEIR MENTAL HEALTH

Most people felt like Jacob and answered this question as neutral. He stated,

WELL, YOU KNOW, WHY DON'T YOU USE YOUR, YOU KNOW, GUNS AND TECHNOLOGY BUDGET ON MENTAL HEALTH? AND, YOU KNOW, YOU SHOULDN'T HAVE PEOPLE THAT ARE MENTALLY UNFIT, YOU KNOW, IN THIS SITUATION ANYWAY. THAT'S WHY I'M NEUTRAL ON IT, YOU KNOW. NOT NECESSARILY AGAINST THE IDEA, BUT AGAINST THE IDEA THAT THE PEOPLE SHOULD PAY FOR IT...

The mental stability of law enforcement officers seems to be very important to our communities, so this is something to take into consideration when we make steps towards changing the policing in our communities.

People also largely disagreed that there should be police presence in schools.

POLICE PRESENCE IN SCHOOLS



Dorian, like most of the respondents, strongly disagreed with having police presence in schools:

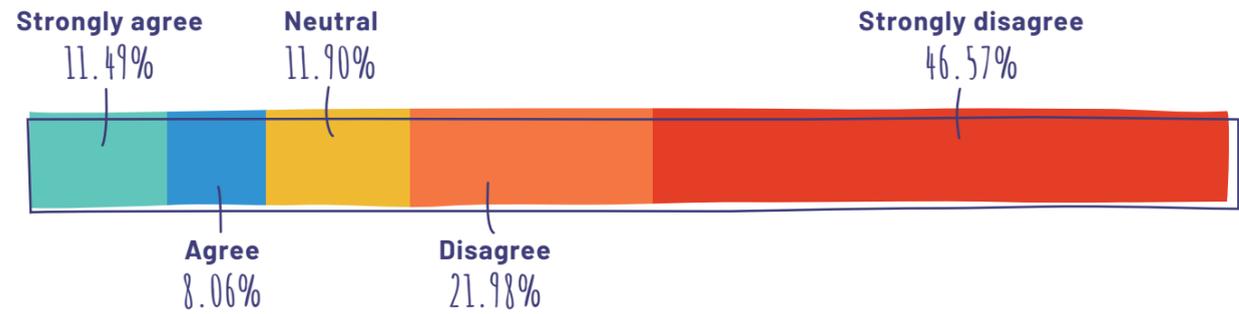
“I DON'T BELIEVE IN POLICE AS A MEANS OF SAFETY. THAT JUST GENERAL LIKE 'WE NEED MORE POLICE TO KEEP THEM SAFE' DOESN'T MAKE SENSE BECAUSE POLICE AREN'T SAFE. SO IT JUST WOULDN'T, IT WOULD BE COUNTERPRODUCTIVE OR COUNTERPRODUCTIVE AND HYPERCRITICAL TO PUT A POLICE OFFICER SOMEWHERE TO KEEP SOMEBODY SAFE. SO THAT'S WHY I DON'T BELIEVE THAT THEY NEED TO BE IN SCHOOLS. TO KEEP CHILDREN SAFE. I'M NOT SURE WHAT'S NEEDED AS AN IMMEDIATE FIX.”

Again, respondents are clear on police not needing to be there, but are not exactly sure what would be needed for children to feel safe at school. This means there is a need for ideas and hopefully, future implementation of these ideas.

Eric was an interviewee who agreed that there should be police presence in schools to mitigate the bullying that occurs in schools. They felt that having one “resource officer” per 100 kids was not enough and there should be an officer dedicated to each grade level at the school. SNaP Co. does not support this. We know that more police in schools does not eliminate the vicious acts of bullying, instead....

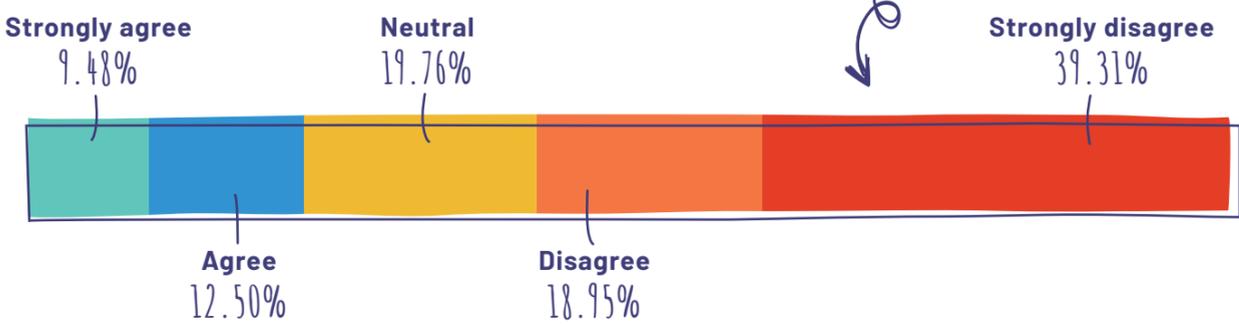
POLICE TRAINING ADDRESSING RACIAL DISPARITIES

LIKE MOST OF THE SURVEY RESPONDENTS, FOLKS WHO WERE INTERVIEWED STRONGLY DISAGREE THAT TRAINING WILL ADDRESS RACIAL DISPARITIES. MOST INTERVIEWEES FEEL THAT NO AMOUNT OF TRAINING IS GOING TO HELP THIS ISSUE AND THAT IT IS A CORE AND ROOT ISSUE HELD UP THROUGH SOCIALIZATION AND MORAL APTITUDES.

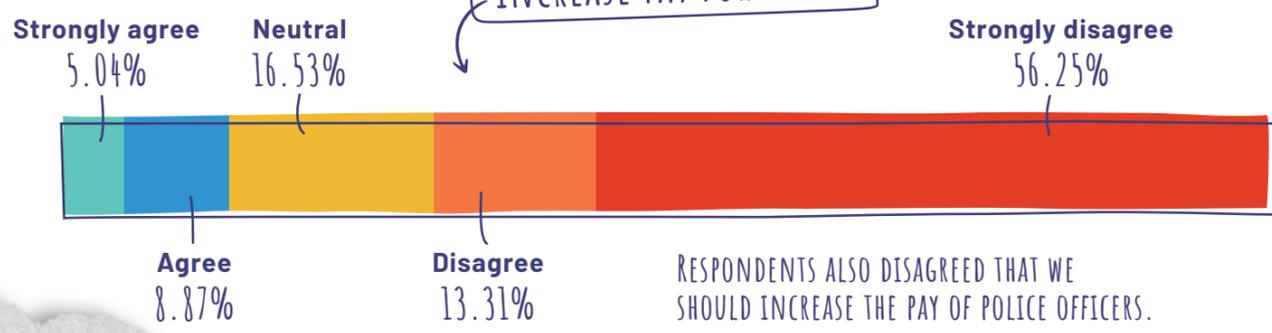


MOST RESPONDENTS FELT THAT MORE POLICING IN THEIR COMMUNITY WOULD NOT BE MUCH HELP, IF AT ALL. YET MAYOR ANDRE DICKENS HAS COMMITTED TO PUTTING 250 MORE OFFICERS ON THE STREET.

MORE POLICE IN AREA



INCREASE PAY FOR POLICE



RESPONDENTS ALSO DISAGREED THAT WE SHOULD INCREASE THE PAY OF POLICE OFFICERS.

Interviewees ranged in their answers about why they disagreed, but for the most part, they believe that for those folks who chose the job, they should not be paid more for the job they chose to do. In addition, if they mess up at their job, for whatever reason, they do not get fired, as opposed to any other job. The special circumstances that police have for their jobs are different than most and the use of their strong police unions make them an impenetrable force.

Community Trainings

While most respondents (52.82%) felt that if they had community trainings to help them tackle issues in their community without police involvement, there were a considerable amount of people who weren't sure and

I THINK HAVING THOSE TRAININGS WOULD HELP TO A CERTAIN EXTENT, BUT THEY WOULDN'T DO ENOUGH TO PREVENT HARM FROM BEING DONE. ALONG WITH MAKING THOSE KINDS OF TRAININGS AVAILABLE TO HELP ME KNOW WHAT TO DO IN A CRISIS, I'D LIKE TO SEE POLICE BUDGET MONEY GOING TO FUND LOW INCOME HOUSING, MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES, SCHOOLS, ETC. (I.E., ALL THE THINGS THAT PREVENT HARM FROM BEING DONE IN THE FIRST PLACE).

I BELIEVE IT NEEDS TO BE A BLEND OF PEOPLE IN THE COMMUNITY AND ALSO TRAINED PROFESSIONALS WHO HAVE EXPERIENCE IN SOCIAL WORK AND HUMAN PSYCHOLOGY

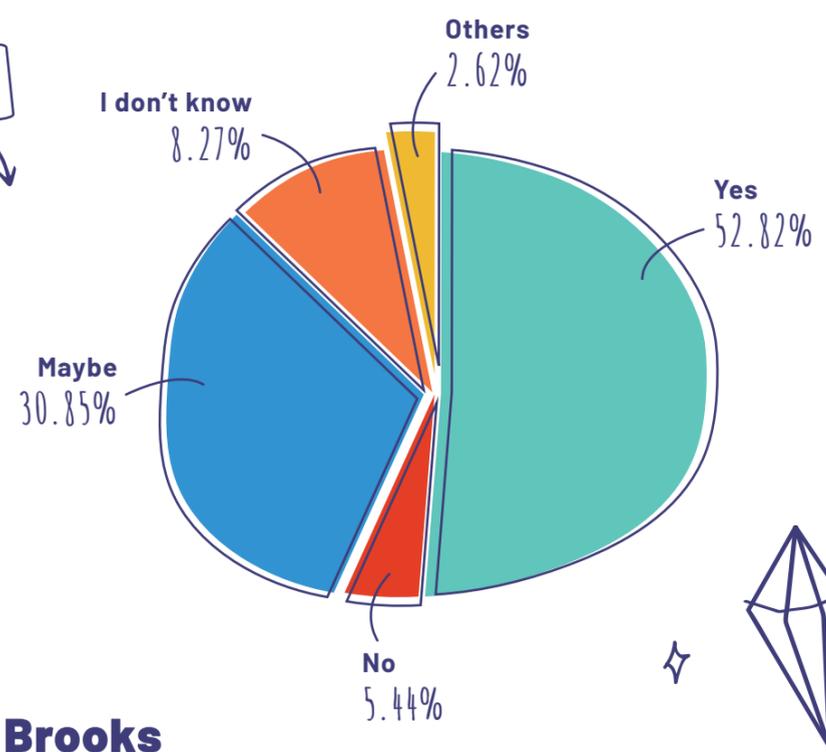
I'D LIKE TO THINK THIS, AND I ALSO THINK IT MIGHT NEED TO BE MORE THAN TRAINING

THE MARGINALIZED PEOPLE IN MY COMMUNITY WOULD BUT A LOT OF THE WHITE PEOPLE WHO RESIDE IN GENTRIFIED BUILDINGS THAT ARE INCONVENIENTLY PLACED WOULD NOT, SADLY

I DON'T THINK THAT THERE IS A COHESIVE ENOUGH COMMUNITY TO DO THIS. I THINK IF A GROUP OF PEOPLE OPTED-IN TO HANDLE MANY OF THE ISSUES TOGETHER, THAT WOULD ADDRESS SOME OF THE CONCERNS. BUT IF ITS JUST GEOGRAPHIC COMMUNITY, AT WHAT SCALE? WHO IS COUNTED? WHO ORGANIZES IT? WHO DEFINES WHO IS "OF" THE COMMUNITY VS. "NOT"? ARE PEOPLE WITHOUT HOMES PART OF THE COMMUNITY? ARE PEOPLE JUST VISITING?

HAVING COMMUNITY TRAININGS

76.41% OF RESPONDENTS HAVE HEARD OF NON-PUNITIVE JUSTICE SYSTEMS AND MOST PEOPLE BELIEVE THAT IT WOULD WORK IN THEIR COMMUNITIES DEPENDING ON THE TYPE OF VIOLATION, HOW MANY PEOPLE AND WHICH PEOPLE WOULD BE INVESTED INTO MAKING IT HAPPEN AND ENSURING THAT THINGS WOULD BE FLUSHED OUT TO ENSURE THAT THE QUALITY OF JUSTICE THAT WOULD BE SERVED IN THEIR COMMUNITIES.



offered insight on their thoughts:

The Murder of Rayshard Brooks

In the interviews, we wanted to know what people's thoughts were about the murder of Rayshard Brooks. The question was asked in an unbiased way, only stating the facts and asking respondents about their feelings about the situation and if they had thoughts on other ways the situation could have gone. All of the interviewees indicated that they felt that Rayshard should not have died. When asked about what could have been done differently, most respondents said that they wished that Rayshard would have complied and that he was undeserving of being murdered in that situation. We know that compliance has not and will not always save us. Respondents' emphasis on listening to officers in order to make it home at night speaks more to the culture of fear than justice.

The feelings around Rayshard's murder are complicated because they have to do with driving under the influence (and possibly hurting someone), community calling law enforcement, his non-compliance, his defensiveness and fleeing the scene, and him subsequently fearing for his life and being murdered. With all aspects taken into consideration, community members feel that his murder is not justified, and it could have been prevented. The same can be said for Kathryn Johnson, Alexia Christian, Jamarion Robinson, Caine Rogers, and DeAundre Phillips.... Too often, officer's fear is used to justify our death when we are the ones who are most afraid. From no-knock raids to mental health calls turned deadly to shooting first and asking questions later, Atlanta police have been dangerously unaccountable to our communities and that unfettered violence must end.

Focused Findings

GENDER IDENTITY & ARRESTS

Although we have some general findings and summarizations when it came to the survey data, SNaP Co. wanted to see if there were particular pieces of data that stood out from the rest. Sure enough, **when thinking about respondents who did not identify as cisgender, the data spoke volumes. There were 128 respondents total that did not identify as cisgender and 42 (32.81%) of those respondents had been arrested by law enforcement; a 6% increase from the total survey respondents. We can conclude that non-cisgender individuals, more likely have a chance of being arrested than cisgender individuals.**

Some of those charges included 'pedestrian in the roadway,' and 'jaywalking,' which is often known that it could be signified as 'prostitution' and 'loitering for illicit sex acts,' but without the proven justification. The inability of trans communities of color to rely on the police is deeply rooted in systemic profiling, targeting, and criminalization of trans people of color for sex work and HIV-related offenses.

Atlanta has had a reputation for wanting to punish (and even banish⁷) sex workers, particularly trans and queer sex workers who are seen as damaging the reputation of Midtown and its businesses. Although arrests have slowed down with regards to trans women and sex work.⁸ This needs to be noted as an indication of the culture in Atlanta. The policing of people's sexual choices and practices has been particularly harmful to trans communities of color. According to an international study, transgender women are 49 times more likely than the general population to have HIV – and 62 percent of Black trans women in a CDC survey reported having HIV. Georgia has one statute outlining seven HIV-specific offenses.

Fear of entering the criminal justice system because of an HIV-related offense actively prevents trans people of color from accessing critical, life-saving resources and care. Therefore, they do not receive treatment, leading to more people being impacted by the further spread of HIV. Continuing to criminalize HIV will not end the HIV epidemic in Atlanta, nor will it support grassroots organizations providing services and housing to the most impacted people. The federally-funded HOPWA program is supposed to help people living with HIV to obtain housing, but the federal Housing and Urban Development department has identified many problems with Atlanta's administration of the \$23 million grant meant to help about 2,300 people.

In an interview, Tina remarks:

WELL, BEING A TRANS WOMAN, THERE WAS A TIME WHEN SEX WORK WAS THE WAY THAT I WAS ABLE TO LIVE ANY KIND OF LIFE OF SUBSTANCE, PAY BILLS, JUST TO SURVIVE. AND THERE WERE TIMES WHERE I HAD INTERACTIONS WITH THE POLICE. UM, THEY WEREN'T ALWAYS GOOD INTERACTIONS. BECAUSE THERE WERE TIMES THAT INVOLVED ME BEING ARRESTED AND LOCKED UP.

7. Person. (2013, February 11). *City Hall takes up ordinance to banish prostitutes*. WSB. Retrieved from <https://www.wsbtv.com/news/local/city-hall-takes-ordinance-banish-prostitutes/242538995/>
 8. From Pre-Arrest Diversion Initiative pilot data.

As Tina alludes to, each police interaction is unique and that is precisely the point. We are led to believe through film, television, and societal emphasis on “authority” that all police have our best interests at heart. That all police should be listened to. When in reality, the treatment one will receive at the hands of police depends on a wide range of variables. *The kind of day that officer is having. The race, gender, or perceived sexuality of the person they’re stopping. The quotas and key performance indicators that the officer is up against.* The system is flawed by design which created an unpredictable and chaotic experience for those closest to the margins.

The power is in the officer’s hands first and foremost. That is a perfect indication of differential police dynamics, all depending on the arresting officer. Fair or unfair treatment is all in their hands – so how do we move from tolerance to acceptance and moving towards a model where trans people, and in particular, trans women, are not prey to law enforcement officers. Survival sex work also has implications towards social services rendered in our communities. Steps must be taken to ensure equitable treatment amongst those who are not cisgender, and are just trying to survive the best and possibly only way they know how.

The criminalization of sex work has a similar impact on trans communities of color and our safety. This is particularly true for Black trans women. In the National Center for Transgender Equality 2015 report – the largest survey of its kind – one in eight (12%) respondents reported participating in survival sex work in their lives. Laws that criminalize sex work push the industry underground, making it more dangerous. Sex workers face high rates of violence because clients assume they can assault or rob sex workers and get away with it. Fear of being arrested and of receiving abuse from police prevents Black trans women who participate in sex work from reporting incidents of violence.

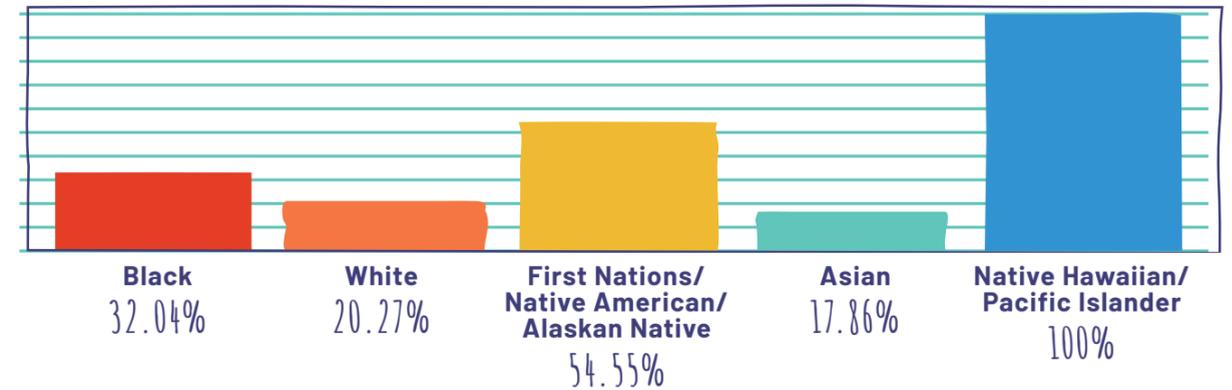
This fear is also felt by trans women of color who are not engaged in sex work, as police often profile trans women of color as sex workers, whether they are or not. In SNaPCo’s 2016 report, 80% of trans women of color stopped by APD reported being profiled as sex workers. Among respondents stopped or approached by the APD, some were forced to engage in sexual activity and/or experienced unwanted sexual contact from an officer. Others reported being verbally harassed, disrespected, misgendered, asked invasive questions about their bodies and genitals, and being physically assaulted and/or harmed.



Race & Arrests

When it came to arrests regarding race, there were some blaring differences that should be noted. Now, these particular findings aren’t that much different from national data, but since we found something similar that was happening in the Atlanta Metro area, we thought this was also important to note.

As far as arrests, the percentage of arrests by race, are as follows:



As you can see Black respondents have been arrested at a much higher rate as it pertains to the number of respondents. With the Atlanta Metro Area population being almost majority Black at 47%⁹ as of 2021, this helps us to see that Black Atlantans are more susceptible to being arrested by law enforcement, purely based on race (and of course, other societal and social cultural factors that make this problem systematic).

What Do These Findings Mean to Us

An interviewee, Tina, laid it out perfectly:

I JUST THINK THAT WE CAN ALL COME TOGETHER TO SOLVE A LOT OF OUR PROBLEMS. OUR PROBLEMS ARE MAN MADE; THEY’RE NOT ABOVE US BEING ABLE TO SOLVE THE PROBLEMS THAT WE HAVE IN OUR COMMUNITIES, IN OUR STATE, IN OUR NATION AND OUR WORLD. YOU KNOW, AS THE PEOPLE, YOU KNOW, WE HAVE TO RECOGNIZE FIRST THAT WE’RE HUMAN BEINGS. BEFORE, YOU KNOW, I’M A HUMAN BEING BEFORE I’M A TRANS PERSON, OR A BLACK TRANS PERSON, I’M A HUMAN BEING. I’M HAVING THE SAME HUMAN EXPERIENCE THAT YOU ARE THAT THE NEXT PERSON IS, AND I THINK THAT IF WE UNDERSTAND THAT FIRST, THE OTHER STUFF IS GONNA FALL INTO PLACE - LIKE IT NEEDS TO.

9. Richards, D. (2021, August 26). Census: No more black majority in Atlanta. 11Alive.com. Retrieved from <https://www.11alive.com/article/news/local/census-no-more-black-majority-in-atlanta/85-645bed51-b9bd-4263-bbd3-40c1a97ded61>



TALE FROM THE TRENCHES:

ON DARING TO DEMAND MORE

"My safety lies within the Black community. It is ultimately racial violence that I'm most worried about. Whenever I am around Black people, I feel safest. Even if they don't know Tiffany the person, they will look out for me because they relate to me and we have a shared experience.

My vision of safety is derived from my mother's upbringing in a small town in Arkansas. Her community, largely due to segregation, had to be self-regulated and resourced. She attended a police-free school, lived in a police-free town. It's a reality many of us cannot imagine. The Black community could not join law enforcement at the time and white policemen didn't venture into Black neighborhoods, so if you weren't in school or in a place you had no business being, your neighbor would call your mom or dad up and let them know where you were. This self-reliance was borne out of state sanctioned deprivation but it proved that Black communities can regulate themselves and have history doing so.

Self-reliance is cultivated in communities with strong ties to one another. It is nurtured when you build real relationships with the people near you... when you genuinely get to know one another. The Southern phenomena of speaking and greeting folks as you see them can seem insignificant but is often an instrumental tool of community building.

Our children deserve communities where they can play, ask to cut the grass, or go into a neighbor's home if they're in trouble without fear that the police will be called. This reality is completely possible but requires alternatives to law enforcement. Recently, I found myself in a predicament with a neighbor that required third party intervention and instead of calling the cops, I contacted the Neighborhood Security System. Having these alternatives in place and reprogramming ourselves to rely on them in place of law enforcement is key to imagining what abolition may look like.

Safety means being equipped with what we need to address both our hopes and our fears. It's

imperative that the government and non-profit organizations begin reallocating resources into the community to bolster initiatives and programs that will lessen the perceived need of law enforcement. In places like Alpharetta where I have a private practice, police catch teens with marijuana and open bottles of liquor in the car. And oftentimes these kids don't even get as much as a citation. They're just taken home where regulation is left up to the parents. What we dream of is attainable, it's just going to require material resources and imagination.

The lessons I've learned doing organizing work with the Reimagine Atlanta City Detention Center Task

Illustration by SOFAHOOD

Force have been invaluable. I was the co-chair of the Progressive Agenda Working Group for Criminal Justice Reform when an emergency vote went up to close the empty jail that was built for the Olympics. We got pushback from constituents who weren't involved in the vote and thought the optics of closing this facility looked crazy. But what about closing this empty facility cut against our goals? It didn't! The only reason it was opposed was because people were afraid and worried about expending their political capital.

It isn't enough to invoke the memory of our ancestors, we must continue the work they began to honor and uphold their legacies. Anything else is a betrayal to their lives and legacy. A cardinal sin is being perpetrated citywide and must be addressed.

The labor of the most brilliant, imaginative, committed people is being taken for granted and squandered. People talk about the violence of white supremacy but not the violence of taking your best and exploiting them so you can go on panels and stages and leverage their work for personal gain. Our work must not be in vain."

- TIFFANY WILLIAMS ROBERTS



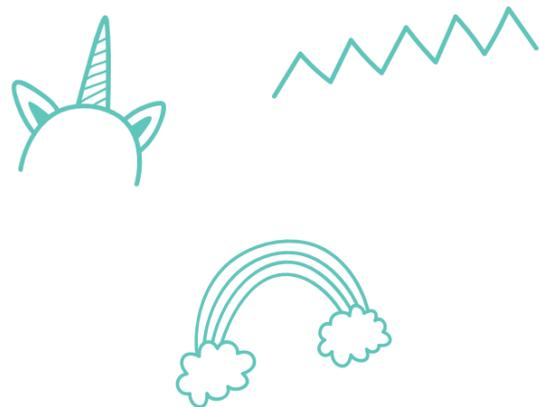
Welcome to



THE TRAP CULTURAL ZONE



IMAGINING A NEW, SAFER ATLANTA:



IT BEEZ IN THE TRAP – THE CASE FOR TRAP CULTURAL ZONES

What does a new, safer Atlanta look like? How do we draw upon all that is *right* in our city while fixing and improving all that is *wrong*? Atlanta is a predominantly Black city ranked in the top 20 U.S. cities with the largest TLGBQ+ populations. Yet our public policy doesn't reflect this nor prioritize the communities that have consistently set Atlanta's culture. Music artists, born and raised in the Trap of Atlanta, have influenced the world, through their music and while the city generates billions of dollars from Trap music and the appropriation of trap culture, it has completely divested from these areas."

Trap is more than just a music form; it's a way of life for marginalized people trying to survive the environments they were born into. Trapping – namely the act of selling drugs – is a major element of trap culture. Artists like 2Chainz, T.I., and Outkast were all born and raised in the trap, but these areas are now being gentrified without meaningfully improving the lives of the Black people who didn't have many options. Between 2014 and 2015, the Atlanta police department made a total of 1,070 marijuana related arrests. 1,032 of those arrests were for possession of marijuana under one ounce. Today, there are an

average of 15 bookings for marijuana possession, which is progress – but much work is still needed.

For the first time, Atlanta is no longer a predominantly Black city and though Black art remains celebrated, Black trappers are consistently criminalized. By erasing the trap, we're erasing Atlanta's culture. SNaP Co. is a LGBTQ organization that fights for everybody Black and those who have been harmed by systemic and interpersonal violence. Alongside the family of DeAundre Philips, Brother Haroun (founder of the Street Groomers), and other community leaders, SNaP Co. led the charge for marijuana reform in Atlanta so that folks wouldn't be profiled and thrown into cages for a few blunts or nuggets of cannabis. Our people have been making a dollar out of 15 cents for far too long. It's time for the City of Atlanta to come up with the other 85.

To do this, we at SNaP Co. envision city-wide Trap Cultural Zones that celebrate the Black and queer communities that make Atlanta so distinct, and reinvest in those communities rather than overpolicing and surveilling them. There are a wealth of Black and TLGBQ+ led businesses, faith spaces,

non-profit organizations, and creative collectives that are making their communities safer, healthier, and more interconnected. We don't need to reinvent the wheel but we can and should celebrate those who are making this city better each and every day. The process of creating trap cultural zones would begin with mapping and highlighting those institutions in a streamlined and accessible way. Businesses who sign up to be part of Trap Cultural Zones will have access to a new network/community of people committed to action, business grants and loans of varying amounts, training and resources on de-escalation tactics that don't involve police, and other incentives that are community informed and build up new ways of supporting one another.

Once we have mapped these spaces out and increased support for them, we can analyze the data and spotlight the parts of the city with the highest prevalence of Black and queer community building. These neighborhoods will form the foundation of the first Trap Cultural Zones. What do those communities need? Some regions may have a strong nightlife but few family-friendly activities. Others may need more healthy food options and green spaces. And perhaps others have high rates of interpersonal violence and are in need of dedicated violence interrupters. Other structural improvements might be street repair, increased street lighting, food banks, affordable housing, healthcare clinics, early education centers, and recreation centers. No one neighborhood in Atlanta has the same needs as another but we can meet each of these needs without badges or guns, but rather with preventative and proactive measures. In addition to the above, we have outlined key public safety initiatives to invest in as part of a coalition called The Atlanta Trans Leaders Project (ATL). In

April 2021, Sophie Vasquez, a 36-year-old trans latina leader and organizer of [Community Estrella](#), was murdered in Brookhaven while engaging in survival sex work. In the aftermath, Black, Indigenous, and Latinx trans leaders came together with the mission to collaborate and communicate concerns and policy recommendations regarding the well-being of trans and queer people of color to the mayoral and city council candidates.

Since before The Eagle Raids in 2009, Atlanta has a strong history of systemic violence against Queer people and Black transgender women, particularly those engaging in survival sex work. In 2013, former mayor Kasim Reed and Councilman Julian Bond introduced an ordinance that would ban those convicted with 'solicitation' from our city. In general, Atlanta has one of the largest Black LGBT populations in the U.S., however the visibility of Queer and Trans people in the city has not protected LGBTQ+ from the problems listed below. And to frame the policy recommendations as the MATERIAL actions needed to make Atlanta a true "Black Gay Mecca." What does it look like to move beyond visibility? It looks like Elected Officials recognizing the pervasiveness of trans violence, homelessness, HIV, etc. It means elected officials, acting on the policy recommendations being proposed.

In addition to a renewed investment in these zones' holistic health, we will ensure that the built environment reflects the people and culture who make Atlanta so dynamic. From murals to art installations to architecture, Atlanta residents should feel seen, heard, and loved in their day-to-day lives. We will commission Black Atlantans to design the work and engage the wider community in its implementation.

Illustration by SOFAHOOD



<p>END VIOLENCE AGAINST TRANS AND QUEER PEOPLE</p>	<p>END OVER POLICING IN BLACK TRANS AND QUEER COMMUNITIES</p>	<p>SAVE HOPWA AND ENDING CRIMINALIZATION OF HIV FOR ALL ATLANTANS</p>	<p>DECRIMINALIZE SEX WORK TO ENSURE SAFETY AND PROTECTION FOR ALL ATLANTANS</p>	<p>INVEST IN BLACK AND BROWN TRANSGENDER LEADERSHIP TO ALLEVIATE HOMELESSNESS AND ECONOMIC MARGINALIZATION</p>
<p>For city officials to elevate this issue & hold firm against anti-trans violence that helps make the issue part of the public discourse.</p> <p>Invest more funding for capacity-building in Transformative and Restorative Justice approaches in Atlanta, DeKalb, Clayton and Cobb County Public Schools.</p> 	<p>Close the Atlanta City Detention Center and repurpose it to become a Center for Equity, Freedom, and Wellness.</p> <p>Cease arrest for nonviolent offenses and traffic violations.</p> <p>Reallocate funding from the Atlanta Police Department to invest provide more funding and community resources and alternatives, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • interventionists trained to deal with trauma who can be called on in domestic violence situations • 911 operators being trained to respond appropriately to the gender of callers • unarmed mental health professionals who can respond to behavioral health crises • Investing in programs like the Atlanta Policing Alternatives and Diversions Initiative 	<p>The City should follow up on the UCLA School of Law's 2018 study on the impact of the state's HIV statute, which revealed that law enforcement does not maintain data on LGBTQ status. An effort should be made to determine the impact of this statute on trans and queer people of color living with HIV and their healthcare around Atlanta.</p> <p>The City should invest more in programs addressing PrEP access and other aspects of HIV care.</p> <p>The City needs to be forthcoming with demonstrated efforts to address HUD's concerns and specifically inform the public about whether HOPWA funding will be reduced or not.</p> <p>AND</p> <p>We urge that HOPWA funding is not reduced in the city of Atlanta.</p> <p>The City of Atlanta and Mayor Andre Dickens Administrations should specifically include trans and queer people, people living with HIV in its \$1 billion affordable housing plan.</p>	<p>Providing social services tailored to sex workers instead of arresting them.</p> <p>The City should strongly decriminalize sex work now more than ever.</p> <p>The City should address police treatment of trans and queer people of color, and the history of harassment and abuse long reported by members of the community with reparations for survivors.</p> <p>The City should prioritize repealing loitering and solicitation laws for prostitution and implement Restricted Record access at the city level for sex work offenses.</p> <p>The City and Fulton County should change standard operating procedures of using condoms as evidence to prosecute and push for a commitment from police and law enforcement actors to prohibit arresting sex workers who are victims of violent crimes.</p> <p>The City and Fulton County commitment from the District Attorney and Solicitor General to desist in prosecuting prostitution cases.</p>	<p>Atlanta and Fulton county should develop public/private partnerships to increase employment opportunities for trans people.</p> <p>Reallocate at least \$3 million in funds from the Atlanta Police Department's 2022 budget to grassroots organizations that support leadership development opportunities like the Solutions Collaborative's, SNaP4Freedom Community Organizing School, and Atlanta's TGNC360 which provides job readiness courses for trans and gender non-conforming people.</p> <p>The City should also invest in cooperative worker centers for trans and queer people and collaborate with grassroots organizations to mandate LGBTQI Diversity and Inclusion training for all city employees, police departments, businesses, and organizations registered with the city of Atlanta.</p>

Finally, the launch and rollout of these newly dubbed Trap Cultural Zones will take place through a digitized map layout – such as via Google Maps’ ‘Local Guides’ feature – that encourages residents and tourists alike to explore the beauty of Atlanta all across the city. In addition, a series of events and activations in each neighborhood will be curated by the managing committee. These events will include (but not be limited to) block parties, parades, speaker series, markets, talent showcases, and advocacy initiatives.

Similar ideas have been championed and successfully instituted in other parts of the nation. For example, the City of San Francisco established Compton’s Transgender Cultural District through a resolution to acknowledge historical sites, preserving existing spaces, planning and policy protections for TLGBQ+ communities. Now known as the Transgender Cultural District is the first and only Transgender District in the nation. The resolution highlighted the historic significance of the area by stating that the location was the site of the Compton’s Cafeteria Riots in August 1966, the first Gay affirming march in San Francisco (known as Gay Freedom Day Parade), and the site of the first lectures on homosexuality and discussion on parenting for queer individuals. As a result, the cultural significance is that the TLGBQ+ community has relied on the area as a hub of gay nightlife and an important center of social services. The resolution noted that San Francisco Pride Celebration marches through parts of the District and that the Adonis Bookstore is the first gay bookstore in the nation. The architectural significance is that Compton’s Transgender Cultural District is the last place of refuge for Transgender and Gender-variant individuals due to discrimination in accessing housing.

We envision such an initiative in Atlanta as a public-private partnership led by a committee of rotating Black community members. The budget to fund such a venture can be pooled from the Mayor’s Office of Cultural Affairs, the Atlanta Convention and Tourism Boards, and public safety budgets. The Trap Cultural Zones will invite long-time residents to have a renewed sense of ownership over our beloved city by investing in the best we have to offer and disincentivizing senseless violence. And Black and LGBTQ+ people from all around world can come and truly invest in the TRAP™





TALE FROM THE TRENCHES:

ON BUILDING POLITICAL POWER

“As a young, Black elected official, I’ve learned that most people build power through intimidation. They thrive off of their ability to make others feel small. The first time I ever felt unsafe was in the late 90s, when I was just a little girl. I was getting off the school bus and saw men in white hoods, bearing Confederate flags. At that age, I couldn’t really conceive of what the Ku Klux Klan truly was and meant; I was just confused as to why they were so covered up. But even without knowing what their political ideology stood for, I sensed that I should be afraid. Their presence made sure to intimidate me.

To this day, in Atlanta, the times when I’ve felt the most unsafe were around law enforcement who routinely flex their power in an effort to intimidate people like me: Black people, queer people. Most recently, the nation watched as I was unlawfully arrested outside of Georgia’s governor’s office for advocating on behalf of my constituents. In March of 2021, Kemp was signing a bill to limit voter rights in what has since been labeled 21st century Jim Crow legislation. The bill went from 2 pages to 98 pages with no time for the public or legislators to review. Something had to be done.

I wasn’t a threat to anyone – except maybe, the status quo – when I walked up to that door. My knocks went ignored, then officers surrounded me and then proceeded to charge me with felony obstruction. All for knocking on a door behind which a decision was being made that would affect millions of people.

It didn’t shock me that law enforcement would take such extreme measures to silence me. But over the course of my career, I’ve seen marginalized people do the bidding of those in power in ways that have never made sense. I’ve watched marginalized people vie for a seat at the table when they should be building a new table. Our ancestors are suffocating due to these respectability politics and we need to let that go and breathe life into ourselves. I’m sick of the posturing and I’m sick of the allies.

We must move past awareness and enlist accomplices. It’s important that people recognize the urgency in this moment. We’re up against too much to settle for what has been. Georgia consistently ranks as one of the top states for military recruits. My district is home to the oldest military fort and spends an exorbitant amount on military spending but won’t give those same people therapy, familial support, quality education, or healthcare. How and where we invest our money in this country is also a form of intimidation. And until we begin following the money or building our own political power, we’ll constantly be playing defense. Marginalized people are credible messengers and experts on our issues. It’s time that those representing us get on the offense and play ball. People like me can’t do it alone.”

- PARK CANNON



Illustration by SOFAHOOD

CONCLUSION,

DISCUSSION GUIDE, & FURTHER RESOURCES



We don't do this work just for the sake of doing it. We are not bored, paper-pushers. We are directly impacted by the state of our police, the violence on our streets, and the yearnings of our people. In 2015, Ju'Zema Goldring, a Black transgender woman, was arrested for trafficking cocaine when officers found a stress ball filled with an unknown substance. An official narcotics test confirmed that the content was not cocaine but Goldring was still forced to sit in a men's prison for 6 months until she made bail. It would be another 7 years before a judge would confirm that Goldring's civil rights were violated and awarded her \$1.5 million in reparations for the injustices she faced. It shouldn't take all of this for our people to be treated with respect. We do this work because it is urgent as hell and because our communities depend on it. Every Atlantan deserves a bolder vision for their safety than bloated police budgets and the status quo. We vow to deliver it to them. To us.

But we cannot do this work alone. That is why we wrote this report. To consolidate the research, data, and stories that will embolden a new generation of Atlantans to rise up and demand better for us all. That can only happen if everyone who reads this report, shares it with others and ignites new

conversations about public safety. That means we need media makers reading it. Elected officials. Clergy. Gangsters. Business owners. Sex workers. Non-profit leaders. Teenagers. Elders. Single moms. Working dads. Black families. Queer families. Neighbors and the people who love us. We need all of us to make Atlanta safer.

Below you will find discussion questions that will help you deepen this conversation and take it to every corner of our beloved city. Don't let the dream die here. Dare to dream... if not for yourself, for the children of Atlanta who are begging us to get this right. We can do this. We will do this. Together.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS:

- When was the safest you've ever felt? When was the least safe you've ever felt?
- What are the forms of violence that need to be done away with?
- What community infrastructure makes you feel safest?
- When someone hurts or takes something from you, what do you need to regain trust again? Is anyone in your community currently positioned to offer you that?



- What are things all Black people should be able to do and have without police intervention?
- If people had consistent and safe housing, access to healthcare, and good jobs, what crime might become drastically reduced or obsolete?
 - In this world, what other incentives would people have to hurt or take from others? How can we continue to reduce those incentives?
- While we work to build a society where people have less justifications for hurting one another, how can we support those who've survived harm in the past and are still vulnerable to violence?
- How have we been led to believe that we can only pursue justice for one community at a time? Who benefits from this thinking? Who is most often sacrificed or told to wait their turn?
- How have we been convinced that our safety can only be achieved through closing ourselves off from others? How can we find our way back to community?

FURTHER RESOURCES:

Reading

- Movement 4 Black Lives reports
 - [Struggle for Power: The Ongoing Persecution of Black Movement By the U.S. Government](#)
 - [Ending War On Black People](#) policy platform
- Andrea Ritchie and Mariame Kaba
 - [Interrupting Criminalization](#)
 - [No More Police: A Case for Abolition](#)

- Mariame Kaba
 - [Fumbling Towards Repair](#)
 - [We Do This Til We Free Us](#)
 - Park Cannon – [The Universal Guide to Running for Office](#)
- Monique Morris – [Pushout: The Criminalization of Black Girls in Schools](#)
- Andrea Ritchie – [Invisible No More: Police Violence Against Black Women And Women of Color](#)
- Derecka Purnell – [Becoming Abolitionists](#)
- [Separation and Stigma](#)

Watching

- [Blowin' Up](#) – a documentary on sex work, the various reasons people engage in the industry, and the ways we can create more safety for marginalized people trying to survive
- [Paris is Burning](#) – a documentary film on NYC ballroom culture and the Black and Latino TLGBQ+ who put it on the map
- [Stonewall Uprising](#) – a documentary recenters the reality that Stonewall, and subsequent Pride celebrations, stem from riots against transphobic and homophobic police violence
- [The Death and Life of Marsha P Johnson](#) – a documentary chronicling the legacy of legendary transgender activist Marsha P. Johnson

Social Media

- [@Snap4Freedom](#)
- [@Mvmnt4BlackLives](#)
- [@Law4BlackLives](#)





TALE FROM THE TRENCHES:



ON BLACK VISIONS OF SAFETY



"The first time I felt unsafe was also the first time I realized what it is to be Black Black in America. I was told that education was the key to my future but that didn't matter to the judge who sentenced me to a decade in prison. The truth didn't matter and neither did my safety. It was incredibly traumatic for me but also turned me into the organizer I am today.

Through and since my own incarceration, I learned that Black people are the most caged people per capita on the planet. The worst moments I've ever experienced were the result of colorism, sexism, and capitalism. And that doesn't mean it only took place at the hands of white people. I've seen my own community hurt me just as much whether because they were trying to survive themselves or because they had internalized the toxic beliefs created and fed to us by white supremacy. All of this goes to show you that locking people up will not stop violence from happening. We have to get to the root causes.

I recently worked with other organizers to close Atlanta City Detention Center because I wanted my people to have the opportunity to truly dream... to envision the world we want to leave behind and build it together. **That is success to me. Not necessarily winning every single campaign but changing hearts and minds every step of the way. To get our voices amplified and actually listened to. That is public safety! Not militarized police. Not bars. Not**

depravity. Niggas having niggas' backs. Because when a nigga has my back, that's when I feel safe.

I want to see an Atlanta where blackness is celebrated everywhere you turn. I want to see healing i for those impacted by this criminal legal system. I want to see an investment in our quality of life. Where little kids double dutch outside again and parents get off of work early enough to actually spend time with their families. Police and prisons don't give us any of that mostly because they're vestiges of slavery. We talk about the legacy of institutionalized racism but we haven't fully unpacked the harm policing has on our people. That's what I'm committed to because I need my people to survive.

I need my people to see that Black and other marginalized people can never get justice through systems that prioritize whiteness. Our safety is found in the power of the people, not the will of the wealthy. Freedom is an illusion until we can all eat the same bread. That's what I organize towards. A world where my godchild is cherished and protected. Not gunned down. Don't I deserve that? Don't we deserve that?"

- BRIDGETTE SIMPSON



GLOSSARY, NOTES & CITATIONS

ABOLITION
A movement that requires the world to end its dependence on systems of control that were borne out of slavery. It is the destruction and reimagining of the current systems of surveillance, justice, and accountability.

REPARATIONS
A material compensation for not only the abuse Blacks suffered at the hands of enslavement but a return of the resources and labor extracted from these communities.

SAFETY
A state of being where conditions that lead to material, psychological, or physical harm are reduced and eliminated.

RESTORATIVE JUSTICE
A system that centers the rehabilitation of offenders through reconciliation with victims of their crimes and the community.

center for EQUITY, FREEDOM, & WELLNESS
The reimagining of the Atlanta City Detention Center as a rehabilitative and restorative space with a rooftop garden, solar panels, offices for non-profit organizations, and community meetings spaces replacing the bars and concrete on the current structure.

SEX WORK
Adults who receive money or goods in exchange for consensual sexual services or erotic performances, either regularly or occasionally.

QUEER
Refers to individuals that do not prescribe or identify with the hegemonic definitions of gender and sexuality.

HOPWA
HOUSING OPPORTUNITIES FOR PEOPLE WITH AIDS
The only federal program dedicated to addressing the housing needs of low-income people living with HIV/ AIDS.

TRANSFORMATIVE JUSTICE
A framework that prioritizes harm reduction and guides society on how to respond to violence without enacting more violence.

Transgender or Trans*
People whose gender identity is different from what they were assigned at birth.

TRAP
Trap is more than just a music form; it's a way of life for marginalized people trying to survive the environments they were born into. Trapping – namely the act of selling drugs – is a major element of trap culture.

Criminalizing
MAKING AN ACTIVITY A CRIME AND PUNISHABLE BY LAW

TLGBO+
Reimagining of LGBTQ+ acronym that centers and prioritizes the Transgender community.

HUD
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT
The federal agency that is helping create suitable living situations for all Americans.

The materials compiled above are the braintrust of the brilliant team of organizers at Solutions Not Punishment Collaborative, affectionately and widely known as SNaP Co. Our work exists because of those who came before us and specific sections of this report would not have been possible without certain resources, archetypes, and data drawn from our extended community:

- City of Atlanta's Department of Corrections Official About Page
- "Defund Police," a collaboration with Project Nia & Blue Seat Studios. Find more information about alternatives to policing at DontCallThePolice.com

HISTORICAL TIMELINES

- Ashley Coleman
- [Law 4 Black Lives \(L4BL\)](#)
- [Racial Justice Action Center](#)
- James, Kimberly Marissa. "Challenges to Control? Atlanta's Maynard Jackson and the Politics of Police Reform" University of Michigan. [ProQuest Dissertations Publishing, 2002. 3057973.](#)

2021 SURVEY ON A SAFER ATLANTA METHODOLOGY

The Lead Organizer, Outreach Coordinator and staff were primarily responsible for recruiting participants and getting them to fill out the survey (APPENDIX A). Because we were in the middle of a global pandemic when this survey launched, SNaP Co. and Contract Liberation worked to recruit people to get them to take the survey online. There were 638 total responses to the survey.

The survey (Appendix A) was created by SNaP Co. and Contract Liberation and put into Survey Monkey software on July 21, 2020 for distribution and closed on May 31, 2021. Out of 638 total responses, there was an 84% completion rate that completed the entire survey. Currently, it takes survey takers an average of seven (7) minutes and 53 seconds, which is ideal considering we wanted to keep the survey under 15 minutes.

Once people finished the survey, respondents had the opportunity to give their information for a possible future interview that would expand upon these questions (APPENDIX B). Out of the 444 respondents who answered the question, 21.17% of respondents (94), said they would be willing to do another hour-long interview. Out of those 94, 44 respondents said that they had been arrested;

this is the population that we concentrated on for the interviews. Out of those 44 respondents, we interviewed 15 people. These 15 stories will be used to make an impact on social media, specifically around the politicization of Black folks and policing in their communities. We believe that storytelling will have a great impact and we believe that this dissemination of information will be fruitful in our goals to finding better ways to help our communities thrive.

IMAGINING A NEW, SAFER ATLANTA

Compton's Transgender Cultural District Establishment of Compton's Transgender Cultural District. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://sfbos.org/sites/default/files/r0255-21.pdf>

SPECIAL THANKS

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We believe in collaborative and inclusive organizing that builds a larger movement toward safety, wholeness, and transformation for Black people. This project involved hundreds of hours of zoom calls, research, outreach, direct actions, writing, strategizing, synthesizing, dreaming and building with our communities. We could not have organized without our members, our team and the 700 people who shared their opinions in the Safer Atlanta survey.

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Law4Black Lives
CloseTheJailATL
Movement for Black Lives
Trans Housing Coalition
In Defense for Black Lives Coalition
Black Futurist Group
Community Estrella
Ubuntu, Inc
Trans Women of Color Healing Project
Atlanta Policing Alternatives and Diversions
Karissa Lewis
Andrea Ritchie



Marbre Stahly-Butts
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Sophie Vasquez
Tee Tee Dangerfield
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Alexia Christian
Juan Evans

YOU ARE OUR NORTH STARS.



THE **#DEEPERTHANVISIBILITY** REPORT
SHOWS US EVIDENCE THAT IT IS
TIME FOR OUR COMMUNITY TO BUILD
AND IMPLEMENT THE SOLUTIONS TO
SYSTEMIC ABUSE AND STRUGGLE.
THE SOLUTION IS ALWAYS **ABOLITION**.

SOLUTIONS
NOT
PUNISHMENT

March 31, 2022

snap4freedom.org